LEO STRAUSS

Plato's *Apology of Socrates* & *Crito*

A course offfered in the autumn quarter, 1966

Department of Political Science, The University of Chicago

Edited and with an introduction by David Janssens

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With the assistance of Brandon Sward and Peter Walford

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Editor's Introduction

Plato's *Apology of Socrates* & *Crito*

D. Janssens

The *Apology of Socrates* occupies a central place in the thought and work of Leo Strauss. The complex relationship between philosophy and politics, memorably dramatized in Plato's best-known dialogue, is a permanent theme in Strauss's writing and teaching. Moreover, the dialogue played a key role in his intellectual development. Strauss's engagement with the *Apology* dates back to the early 1930s. His critical study of Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*, published in 1930, led him to conclude that modern rationalism had in fact failed to shake the foundations of revealed religion, since it proved to be based on a faith in the power of autonomous reason that matched its adversary's faith in a God who demands loving obedience. At the same time, Strauss found himself unable to accept a wholesale rejection of reason and a concomitant return to faith. In an autobiographical preface to the English translation of his book on Spinoza, published in 1965, Strauss summed up the quandary as follows:

> Other observations and experiences confirmed the suspicion that it would be unwise to say farewell to reason. I began therefore to wonder whether the self-destruction of reason was not the inevitable outcome of modern rationalism as distinguished from premodern rationalism, especially Jewish-medieval rationalism and its classical (Aristotelian and Platonic) foundation.[i]

In a lecture on "Cohen and Maimonides," given in 1931, Strauss showed how he had begun to find a way to recover premodern rationalism. His point of departure was Hermann Cohen's suggestion that, contrary to popular understanding, the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides had been a *Platonist* rather than an Aristotelian. What made Maimonides a Platonist, Cohen argued, was the primacy he accorded to *ethical* and *political* questions, a concern ultimately rooted in the crucial question raised by Socrates, the founder of classical political philosophy: *How should I live*? Although Strauss disagrees with the way in which Cohen reaches this conclusion, the insight does constitute a breakthrough in his thinking. While as a young Jew, he was torn between the demands of Judaism and the demands of secular modernity, he now sees that the Socratic question underlay his struggle with the theological-political predicament throughout.

In the lecture, Strauss spells out the ramifications of this new understanding by taking his cue from the *Apology*. As he explains in a number of terse and forceful assertions, the Socratic question regarding the right way of life is both *radical* and *political*, and as such it also points to an *answer*:

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[i] L. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 33.

> "[Socrates] *wants* to remain with the question. And that is because the question matters; because a life that is not questioning is not a life worthy of man."[ii]
>
> "*Socratic questioning about the just life is a questioning together about the just life together for the sake of the just life together*, for the sake of the true state. Socrates's questioning is essentially *political*."[iii]
>
> "Socrates therefore does give an answer to the question regarding the just life: *questioning about the just life—that alone is the just life*. 'The greatest good for man is this: to converse each day about virtue and the other subjects about which you hear me conversing as I examined myself and others; an unexamined life, however, is not worth living for man.'"[iv]

In many ways, Strauss's early interpretation of the *Apology* is programmatic of the dual path his investigations will follow in the ensuing years. On the one hand, there is his critical reading of founders of modern political philosophy such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, whose unquestioning acceptance of the possibility of political philosophy he reveals to be problematic, inasmuch as it is predicated on a failure to repeat the Socratic question. On the other hand, there is his rediscovery of the medieval rationalism of Alfarabi and Maimonides and its roots in the classical rationalism of Plato and Aristotle, as well as its specific way of preserving and reviving the Socratic impulse by means of the art of writing between the lines.[v] Both the way up to the Ancients and the way down to the Moderns, however, are part and parcel of a lifelong attempt to understand Socrates upon which Strauss embarked in the early 1930s.
Throughout the courses that have now become available, Strauss presents his audience with the splendid fruits of these deep and sustained explorations. At the same time, he remains constantly mindful of the seeds that lie at their origin. In the present course on Plato's *Apology of Socrates and Crito*, this becomes apparent at the start of the very first lecture, when he discusses the difficulty of distinguishing between Socrates and Plato:

> And we may draw this conclusion: that in this dimension one cannot make a distinction between Socrates and Plato, and one cannot be seriously concerned with that. The question of the sources, in other words, must be abandoned as unanswerable. So we drop the historical question. But without a question, one cannot enter, penetrate a book. The question need not be explicit, but it is better if it is explicit, at least in the case of an older man. Now the alternative to a historical question is the philosophic question, or at any rate a philosophic question. Which is that philosophic question? We can say, without

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[ii] L. Strauss, "Cohen and Maimonides," trans. Martin D. Yaffe and Ian A. Moore, in *Leo Strauss on Maimonides: The Complete Writings*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 199.
[iii] Ibid., 200.
[iv] Ibid., 200.
[v] For a more extensive and more detailed account, see D. Janssens, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Philosophy, Prophecy, and Politics in Leo Strauss's Early Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008).

> going out of bounds, that question is the relation of the philosopher classically presented by Socrates to the city classically presented by Athens.

Strauss thus reconnects his current interpretative concern with the general philosophic concern that has animated his thinking for more than three decades. Reading and interpreting the *Apology of Socrates* and the *Crito*, as well as the *Apology* written by Xenophon, he presents and tests his understanding of the peculiar rationalism that is founded on the Socratic question regarding the best way of life. By the same token, he continually draws the attention of his audience to the great differences with modern rationalism: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Kant figure prominently in several of the lectures.

Doing justice to the wealth and depth of Strauss's findings and observations in an introduction is impossible. However, it may be useful to point out one overarching motive that becomes visible throughout the lecture course. Both in discussing the *Apology* and the *Crito*, Strauss brings to light, not only the myriad of rhetorical and poetic devices employed by Plato's Socrates to perplex his audience and to provoke the thoughtful awareness of the reader-spectator, but also the particular action underlying and informing the argument of the dialogues. In the *Apology*, we are able to witness Socrates's defiance and deliberate insolence towards both his accusers and his judges, calculated to secure both his condemnation and his future reputation. In the *Crito*, in contrast, we are able to see and hear how Socrates skillfully personifies and divinizes the Laws of Athens, in order to pre-empt the selfish rescue operation undertaken by his old friend, to reconcile Crito with his fellow Athenians and, again, to manage and shape the image that he will hand down to coming generations. A similar, peculiarly Socratic, combination of doing well and faring well will inform the argument and the action of the *Phaedo*, in which an account of the death of Socrates is related.

Shortly before his own death in 1973, Strauss wrote an essay "On Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito*," which was published posthumously in a *Festschrift* for his oldest and best friend, Jacob Klein.[vi] In the introduction to the essay, he stated the following: "the *Apology of Socrates* is the portal through which we enter the Platonic kosmos: it gives an account of his whole life, of his whole way of life, to the largest multitude, to the city of Athens, before which he was accused of a capital crime; it is *the* dialogue of Socrates with the city of Athens [. . .]."[vii] One cannot help but surmise that this return to the *Apology* may also have been a final return to the portal through which he entered the Platonic cosmos, to the beautiful order of which he devoted his whole life. The reader of the present transcript will find in Strauss a guide who is exceptionally well-traveled and experienced, but whose experience has in no way impeded his capacity to renewed philosophic wonder—and enjoyment.

[vi] "On Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito*," in *Essays in Honor of Jacob Klein* (Annapolis: St. John's College, 1976), 155-170. The essay was republished in L. Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 38-66.

[vii] Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 38.

The Leo Strauss Transcript Project

Leo Strauss is well known as a thinker and writer, but he also had tremendous impact as a teacher. In the transcripts of his courses one can see Strauss commenting on texts, including many he wrote little or nothing about, and responding generously to student questions and objections. The transcripts, amounting to more than twice the volume of Strauss's published work, will add immensely to the material available to scholars and students of Strauss's work.

In the early 1950s mimeographed typescripts of student notes of Strauss's courses were distributed among his students. In winter 1954, the first recording, of his course on Natural Right, was transcribed and distributed to students. Professor Herbert J. Storing obtained a grant from the Relm Foundation to support the taping and transcription, which resumed on a regular basis in the winter of 1956 with Strauss's course "Historicism and Modern Relativism." Of the 39 courses Strauss taught at the University of Chicago from 1958 until his departure in 1968, 34 were recorded and transcribed. After Strauss retired from the University, recording of his courses continued at Claremont Men's College in the spring of 1968 and the fall and spring of 1969 (although the tapes for his last two courses there have not been located), and at St. John's College for the four years until his death in October 1973.

The surviving original audio recordings vary widely in quality and completeness. When Strauss moved away from the microphone the volume of his voice may diminish to the point of inaudibility; the microphone sometimes failed to pick up the voices of students asking questions and often captured doors and windows opening and closing, papers shuffling, and traffic in the street. When the tape was changed, recording stopped, leaving gaps. When Strauss's remarks went, as they often did, beyond the two hours, the tape ran out. After they had been transcribed, the audiotapes were sometimes reused, leaving the audio record very incomplete. And over time the audiotape deteriorated. Beginning in the late 1990s, Stephen Gregory, then the administrator of the University's John M. Olin Center for Inquiry into the Theory and Practice of Democracy funded by the John M. Olin Foundation, initiated the digital remastering of the surviving tapes by Craig Harding of September Media to ensure their preservation, improve their audibility, and make possible their eventual publication. This remastering received financial support from the Olin Center and was undertaken under the supervision of Joseph Cropsey, then Strauss's literary executor. Gregory continued this project as administrator of the University's Center for the Study of the Principles of the American Founding, funded by the Jack Miller Center, and brought it to completion in 2011 as the administrator of the University's Leo Strauss Center with the aid of a grant from the Division of Preservation and Access of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The surviving audiofiles are available at the Strauss Center website: https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/courses.

Strauss permitted the taping and transcribing to go forward, but he did not check the transcripts or otherwise participate in the project. Accordingly, Strauss's close associate and colleague Joseph Cropsey originally put the copyright in his own name, though he assigned copyright to the Estate of Leo Strauss in 2008. Beginning in 1958 a headnote was placed at the beginning of each transcript, which read: "This transcription is a written record of essentially oral material, much of which developed spontaneously in the classroom and none of which was prepared with

publication in mind. The transcription is made available to a limited number of interested persons, with the understanding that no use will be made of it that is inconsistent with the private and partly informal origin of the material. Recipients are emphatically requested not to seek to increase the circulation of the transcription. This transcription has not been checked, seen, or passed on by the lecturer." In 2008, Strauss's heir, his daughter Jenny Strauss, asked Nathan Tarcov, who had been the director of the University's Olin Center and later its Center for the Study of the Principles of the American Founding, to succeed Joseph Cropsey, who had faithfully served as Strauss's literary executor for the 35 years since his death. They agreed that because of the widespread circulation of the old, often inaccurate and incomplete transcripts and the continuing interest in Strauss's thought and teaching, it would be a service to interested scholars and students to proceed with publication of the remastered audiofiles and transcripts. They were encouraged by the fact that Strauss himself signed a contract with Bantam Books to publish four of the transcripts although in the end none were published.

The University's Leo Strauss Center, established in 2008, launched a project, presided over by its director Nathan Tarcov and managed by Stephen Gregory, to correct the old transcripts on the basis of the remastered audiofiles as they became available, transcribe those audiofiles not previously transcribed, and annotate and edit for readability all the transcripts including those for which no audiofiles survived. This project was supported by grants from the Winiarski Family Foundation, Mr. Richard S. Shiffrin and Mrs. Barbara Z. Schiffrin, Earhart Foundation, and the Hertog Foundation, and contributions from numerous other donors. The Strauss Center was ably assisted in its fundraising efforts by Nina Botting-Herbst and Patrick McCusker, staff in the Office of the Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences at the University. The transcripts based upon the remastered tapes are considerably more accurate and complete than the original transcripts; the new Hobbes transcript, for example, is twice as long as the old one. Senior scholars familiar with both Strauss's work and the texts he taught were commissioned as editors, with preliminary work done in most cases by student editorial assistants.

The goal in editing the transcripts has been to preserve Strauss's original words as much as possible while making the transcripts easier to read. Strauss's impact (and indeed his charm) as a teacher is revealed in the sometimes informal character of his remarks. Sentence fragments that might not be appropriate in academic prose have been kept; some long and rambling sentences have been divided; some repeated clauses or words have been deleted. A clause that breaks the syntax or train of thought may have been moved elsewhere in the sentence or paragraph. In rare cases sentences within a paragraph may have been reordered. Where no audiofiles survived, attempts have been made to correct likely mistranscriptions. Changes of all these kinds have been indicated. (Changes to the old transcripts based on the remastered audiofiles, however, are not indicated.) Changes and deletions (other than spelling, italicization, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing) are recorded in endnotes attached to the word or punctuation prior to the change or deletion. Brackets within the text record insertions. Ellipses in transcripts without audiofiles have been preserved. Whether they indicate deletion of something Strauss said or the trailing off of his voice or serve as a dash cannot be determined. Ellipses that have been added to transcripts with audiofiles indicate that the words are inaudible. Administrative details regarding paper or seminar topics or meeting rooms or times have been deleted without being noted, but reading assignments have been retained. Citations are provided to all passages so

readers can read the transcripts with the texts in hand, and footnotes have been provided to identify persons, texts, and events to which Strauss refers.

Readers should make allowance for the oral character of the transcripts. There are careless phrases, slips of the tongue, repetitions, and possible mistranscriptions. However enlightening the transcripts are, they cannot be regarded as the equivalent of works that Strauss himself wrote for publication.

Nathan Tarcov
Editor-in-Chief

Gayle McKeen
Managing Editor

August 2014

Editorial Headnote

This transcript is based upon existing audio files of the course. The course had sixteen sessions, all of which were recorded.

When texts were read aloud in class, the transcript presents the words as they appear in the editions of the texts assigned for the course, and the original spelling has been retained. Citations are included for all passages. Ellipses in the transcript indicate an inaudible word or inaudible words.

The texts assigned for the course were Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito*, both in the same volume of the Loeb Classical Library edition: Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, trans. H. N. Fowler (Loeb Classical Library, no. 36) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).

This transcript was edited by David Janssens, with the assistance of Brandon Sward and Peter Walford.

For general information about the history of the transcription project and the editing guidelines, see the general headnote to the transcripts above.

Session 1: October 18, 1966

Leo Strauss: [1]Well, the first thing I want to do in my own name and by anticipation in the name of the class [is] to express my happiness to see Mr. Reinken back. Mr. Reinken has been serving as a reader in my courses for many years now, and no one could have done it better. Good.

Now let us turn to our subject. This is an introduction to political philosophy, which will be given in the form of a discussion of Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and his *Crito*.[viii] [2]I assume but do not presuppose that you have read these writings, because they are very popular and are accessible in many inexpensive editions. But it is not presupposed; I only ask you to read the two books, short works, carefully, while we go. The *Apology of Socrates* is Socrates's formal defense before an Athenian law court. He had been accused of not believing in the gods in which the city believes, and[3] [of] corrupting the young. Socrates claims, of course, to be wholly innocent, yet he was found guilty and condemned to death. [4]In the *Crito*, Socrates is presented as waiting in prison for his execution, and there he was given the opportunity to escape yet he refused to avail himself of this opportunity despite[5] the fact that he was unjustly condemned. His reason was [that] one must obey the laws, even if one is legally, although unjustly, condemned to die. The bare statement of these most obvious facts suffices to arouse in us indignation, indignation about the Athenians who murdered their best citizen and also indignation about Socrates, who demands that one should obey every law, every judicial decision, who condemns in advance everyone who ever tried to escape from a Nazi or communist execution chamber—because in quite a few cases these people were legally condemned.

Now these acts of indignation are quite healthy, and I urge you to indulge them for I would like us to have a perfectly uninhibited discussion of the issues involved. I ask you only for one kind of restraint: propriety of speech. And by this I mean not merely that you should not use dirty words [laughter],[6] I'll give you a better example. Do not call Socrates's fate a tragedy, for the murder of a man is terrible—or any other human being is terrible but not tragic in any serious sense.[7] According to the master of those who know,[ix] there is no tragedy without mistake, without guilt of the sufferer.[x] Now if some innocent human being is murdered, there is no guilt or mistake involved. Not destruction, but self-destruction or rather self-destruction of a certain kind, is tragic. [8]So I give this as an example of propriety of speech, not to use the word tragic with the usual levity.

One of the greatest men who applied his mind to Socrates's fate did describe it as tragic, and that man was Hegel.[xi] But he made an assumption which is not self-evident,[9] namely, that Socrates was guilty as charged and therefore deserved his death. Yet his death was tragic and not like the end of a common criminal, because a higher right was on Socrates's side. The right with which

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[viii] The edition used in the class is Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Loeb Classical Library, no. 36) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).
[ix] Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* 4: 131.
[x] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452b29-1453a45.
[xi] G.W.F. Hegel, "Socrates," in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1892).

Socrates came into conflict was the divine right based on immemorial tradition, the actual, inherited, moral-religious order which lays claim to men's obedience as a matter of course, without advancing sufficient reasons.[10] The divine right in this sense is based on the premise (ultimately, if we cut away all frills) that the good is identical with the ancestral. Socrates, according to Hegel, rightly questioned that primeval equation. The human mind legitimately desires to act from insight, and that means to act freely. The human mind desires to do the right knowing that it is right, and not merely because it is told that it is right. And as a consequence of this, Socrates raised the question which the old Athenians had never raised, as to whether the gods are, and what they are. Yet this freedom that I call, as it were, before the tribunal of my reason everything which lays claims on me, is what Hegel calls the conscience, and I believe many of us call it this[11]. This freedom lacks by itself content. It is a mere empty freedom, although a very profound freedom. Hence Socrates questioned the traditional order. He subverted it and yet was unable to put another order, the order of reason, in its place. And to that extent Socrates was guilty. He subverted, he destroyed, without building up.

Now a sign of this inadequacy of Socrates is found by Hegel in Socrates's recourse to his *daimonion*. (Now Mr. Reinken, would you write this on the blackboard? If you have any trouble let me know, but I'm sure not.) This *daimonion*—I will always use the Greek word because there is no proper English translation; the nearest literal translation would be a "demonic thing," the thing which Socrates claimed to possess in himself and which gave him some guidance. This *daimonion*, of which we will hear quite a bit in the *Republic*,[xii] was a kind of private oracle, not like the famous public oracles of Delphi and other places, for it had its seat within the free individual. But it nevertheless lacked rationality. If Socrates says, "I don't do that because the *daimonion* advises me against it," then he doesn't have a good reason except that this voice, popping up as it were, speaks against it. Socrates's fate was then necessary: he was guilty as charged. He questioned the religious basis of the Athenian state, and he corrupted the young by undermining paternal authority—paternal authority, of course, because the fathers are older: good [is] equal to ancestral, that goes then through your forefathers, grandfather, father more immediately; and by questioning it one questions paternal authority. On the other hand, Socrates was right in saying that the Athenian state lacked a proper basis, but since he could not supply another social order, the Athenians were right in condemning him. And so this fact that Socrates was guilty in a very important sense, this makes his fate tragic. Yet the Athenians repented of their verdict a few years after Socrates's execution. They thus admitted that they, their state, had already been affected or infected by the Socratic principle. In other words, if anyone had the right to condemn Socrates, it was not the Athenians because they suffered from the same defect. And this principle is the principle of free examination by the individual. Now this much about Hegel's view.

According to a more popular view, right was entirely on Socrates's side. The state has no business to prescribe its citizens what they should believe or not believe. Socrates is the classic martyr for the freedom of questioning, the freedom of the quest for the truth, the freedom of thought. If Socrates acted against the law of Athens, as he probably did, he acted against an unjust law, and therefore he acted justly. But very well, but why then does he demand, as he apparently does in the *Crito*, that one must obey the law of the land without any qualifications,

[xii] Evidently Strauss means the *Apology*.

any ifs and buts? Besides, was not Athens the citadel of freedom and in particular of intellectual freedom? Many of you will have read or heard of Pericles's funeral speech in Thucydides, where Athens is presented as such a citadel of freedom.[xiii] But here we see the only passage where Pericles explicitly speaks of philosophy, [and] he says, "We," namely, we Athenians, "philosophize without softness."[xiv] Without softness. And this might very well be taken to imply that philosophizing with softness was strictly forbidden. And since it is very hard to draw a line between philosophy with or without softness, this explains that Athens was not the citadel of freedom in the sense in which this country, with its very great freedom of speech, can be called a citadel of freedom. Incidentally, this information we receive from the funeral speech is confirmed by Plato's dialogue *Gorgias*, where a most impressive character called Callicles blames those who philosophize when they are already mature men.[xv] In other words, as long as they are lads, that's fine; but if a mature, grown-up man still does this, sitting in corners and talking instead of doing a man's work, this is[12] as ridiculous and disgusting as a grown-up man using baby talk or lisping. . . . Now these observations show incidentally that the theme of the *Apology of Socrates* and of the *Crito* must be of utmost interest to everyone seriously concerned with political matters. For even if it is true that modern liberal democracy has solved the problem which Socrates, according to Hegel, did not solve—namely, the establishment of a moral-social order which is rational and therefore binding on reason and not like the old divine right which was not rational and therefore unconvincing—for even if it were [the case] that modern liberal democracy did not solve the problem which Socrates, according to Hegel, did not solve, it is also true according to the same Hegel that the modern solution[13] presupposed the full elaboration in the course of history of the conflict between Socrates and the city of Athens. Simply stated, our solution, whatever we might have to think of it, would never have been reached unless there had been that tragic conflict between Socrates and the city of Athens and the infinite consequences of this conflict: the work of Plato in the first place; of Aristotle in the second place; and of all of the other philosophers [14]whose difficulties and so on then led[15] men [finally] toward another type of solution, of which liberal democracy is the one best known to us.

Now the question concerning the conflict between Socrates and the city of Athens is in itself what we call a historical question and therefore, being a historical question, the question becomes in the first place one of our sources. How do we know, and how well do we know of this conflict? Is Plato's *Apology of Socrates* in particular a source? It presents itself as the speech of defense delivered by Socrates himself, and hence we can say it is a source of the first order since it presents the issue between Socrates and the city of Athens from one of the two sides. We unfortunately do not have the speeches of the accusers; if we had both we would know everything we would wish to know about that conflict. But is the *Apology of Socrates* as we shall read it the speech of defense delivered by Socrates himself? No one believes this. In other words, no one believes that Plato had a kind of tape recorder or stenographer and put it down and so we read it exactly as Socrates delivered it. Everyone believes that the *Apology of Socrates* is a work of Plato; yet nevertheless it presents itself as Socrates's own speech. Now if we want to make the situation quite clear and at the same time use proper speech, we must say [that] the *Apology of Socrates* raises a false claim. It is, to speak properly, a lie—I mean the Greek word *pseudos*,

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[xiii] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* II: 37.
[xiv] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* II: 40.
[xv] *Gorgias* 484c6-484c10.

which I translate by lie, means every falsehood and does not have all the unpleasant connotation[s] which our word lie has. But nevertheless, Plato presents Socrates as making this speech and the innocent reader believes he hears what Socrates said in 399 in Athens. He misleads him; he doesn't get the real McCoy—he gets something which Plato made, perhaps on the basis of genuine materials, but as it is it is not the genuine thing.

Now this is particularly noteworthy since within the *Apology* Socrates repeatedly insists on his saying the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Now this leads us to this interesting question: Can[16] a man's utter veracity be the theme of a non-veracious speech? Because the *Apology of Socrates* is not a veracious speech because it is, as we have it, a work of Plato, not of Socrates. We moderns, present-day people, have an easy way out: we say the *Apology* is a work of art, a poetic work, and therefore you can't apply such a crude word like lies. But we have to wonder at this stage: our notion of art may be very sound and may be wonderful, but is it the Platonic view of art, is it the Platonic view of poetry? What did Plato think about poetry? Well, you probably have heard or have read that Plato expelled the poets from his best city, ultimately because of their untruthfulness,[xvi] and therefore Plato would never use this excuse which comes so natural to us. Plato's writing the *Apology* cannot be separated entirely from his writing the *Crito* and many other Socratic dialogues. Plato always makes Socrates speak. Again, it is perfectly proper for us in an uninhibited discussion to compare him with a (how do you call it?) a ventriloquist. Plato makes Socrates speak. All these speeches are Plato's speeches, Plato's writings. Socrates never wrote books or speeches. Yet in a letter that has come down to us as Platonic, we read "quote: There is not now nor will there be any writing of Plato. But those writings which are now said to be his belong to Socrates, having become fair (noble) and young (new)."[xvii] The alternative translations are equally possible. Conclusion: the *Apology* is the work not of Plato, nor of Socrates according to the flesh but of Socrates having become noble, fair, and young—the speech of Socrates who has become transfigured, idealized. And we may draw this conclusion: that in this dimension one cannot make a distinction between Socrates and Plato, and one cannot be seriously concerned with that. The question of the sources, in other words, must be abandoned as unanswerable. So we drop the historical question.

But without a question, one cannot enter, penetrate a book. The question need not be explicit, but it is better if it is explicit, at least in the case of an older man. Now the alternative to a historical question is the philosophic question, or at any rate *a* philosophic question. Which is that philosophic question? We can say, without going out of bounds, that question is the relation of the philosopher classically presented by Socrates to the city classically presented by Athens. But the city—what is a city? Not the houses and walls. The city is above all the citizens. But is the philosopher too not also a citizen? At least he *may* be one, and Socrates *was* a citizen. So we have to say: not the relation of the philosopher to the city, but the relation of the philosopher to the non-philosophers. This is indeed the question without which no Platonic work will open itself to us. One can understand quite a few things without it, but one will miss something very important.

[xvi] *Republic* 605a-605c.
[xvii] Plato, Second Letter 314c2-314c4.

Now this question of the relation of the philosopher to the non-philosophers is of utmost importance if, as Socrates or Plato assert, the way of life of the philosopher is the right way of life. Because then we have to raise the question: What is the relation of those who lead the right way of life to those who do not? Is the relation one of conflict, the good versus the bad? Or can there be a harmony between the two kinds of men? Perhaps; or another possibility, that one kind is entirely absorbed by the other: either the philosophers disappear or the non-philosophers disappear, the non-philosophers becoming philosophers. There is another alternative suggested to us by the *Republic*: no conflict and no absorption, but rule of the philosophers over the non-philosophers. This seems to be a very far-fetched suggestion, and if one takes it very literally I believe it is a far-fetched suggestion, but nevertheless it is very important to consider it. We have an equivalent to this question nearer home and more down to earth, in democracy, where the question arises: Who should have the last say, the democratic assemblies or the experts? This is a very serious question. I think former President Eisenhower spoke of it very strongly in one of his latest speeches.[xviii] Now this is the great question: Can one clarify this issue—democracy or rule of experts—without understanding experts in the light of philosophers? For the following reason: experts are, as everybody knows, specialists, which means partial knowers. Now the partial, the incomplete, cannot be properly understood except in the light of the complete. And the complete knower, at least according to their claim, to his claim, is the philosopher. So I think we will not completely disregard our immediate political problems by considering such a seemingly far-fetched issue.

I have said that given the particular difficulties of the *Apology*—I speak now of the *Apology*, although I think it is not quite proper to do so, because the title is *Apology of Socrates*, and it is important: there is no Platonic book title in which the name of Socrates occurs except [for] the *Apology of Socrates*. And since Plato did this[17] for some reason, I think we owe it to him and therefore also to ourselves that we should call it by its proper name, the *Apology of Socrates*. But in a class, as distinguished from publication, pedantism should not rule, have a full rule, which I gladly admit. So given the particular difficulties regarding the *Republic*, we have no choice but to turn from the historical question to a philosophic question, to a question belonging to political philosophy. Now some difficulties are involved in this going-over from history to philosophy, the most obvious: Why do we study the *Apology*, i.e., engage in what at any rate seems to be a historical study? Furthermore, in making this transition we presuppose that political philosophy is possible. Now too, this is in a way the graver objection. With what right do we make this assumption? In order to understand this issue or to begin to understand it, one must remind oneself of the simple reasoning which originally brought forth, we can say, political philosophy. I have stated this very frequently and since I see some old acquaintances here, I ask them for some indulgence; but as a Greek proverb says, twice and thrice the nice things, so I will not hesitate.

Starting quite from the obvious, what every child can see: politics is a kind of action. Now every action, every political action, has to do either with preservation or with change. We try to preserve what is good; we try to change what is not good. So all action is based on some awareness of good and bad. This awareness by itself has the character of opinion. We cannot

[xviii] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Naval War College," Lecture, Naval War College, Newport, RI, October 3, 1961, para. 12.

very easily, at least, give reasons why we regard this as good and this as bad. But whenever we have an opinion and are aware of the fact that it is only an opinion, this very fact points us to knowledge, at least to the quest for knowledge. So we must seek for knowledge of the good and of the bad in the political sense of the term. The comprehensive political good[18] to which all political action is referred, directly or indirectly, is the complete political good: the good society, a term which you doubtless know. It[19] is not used any more with the frequency with which it was used in former times, but this is a kind of shamefacedness which is incompatible with that propriety of speech to which I referred before. For example, people speak of the open society[xix] and not of the good society, but when you read them you see that they mean by the open society the good society. And at present, under the present Administration, we hear much of the Great Society.[xx] But one has only to know very little of American usage to know that great is only one way of saying good. For example, a great day means of course a good day and not a day of disaster. So[20] it is impossible to avoid some notion of the good society, implying it, and it is important at least for thinking people to make explicit what one does not ordinarily make explicit.

Yet—now this reasoning is perfectly evident and everyone can check it by simply repeating the thought which I sketched, yet despite this prima facie evidence of the conception of political philosophy, the majority of [the] contemporary political science profession denies the possibility of political philosophy. And they say—and they are not always articulate in these matters; they are in one way very definite in their assertions but not very articulate at the same time—but if one tries to state it in simple, proper language, they say political philosophy is impossible, only political science is possible. Of course,[21] since they are not very good at proper speech, they use also the word philosophy all the time without questioning. For example, they might speak of Orlando Wilson's philosophy of big city police administration. [Laughter]. You must have heard that.[xxi] Now this is of course a very loose use of the word,[22] but I think I have to mention it. It is almost wholly useless to study the *Apology of Socrates* and the *Crito* and other things of this kind if we do not possess a previous grasp of the almost overpowering resistance to the fundamental premises of the *Apology* and so on, and this premise is the possibility of political philosophy. In speaking of that resistance I shall not tell you anything new or far-fetched; I only remind you of things which you have, if I may use this term, sucked together—not altogether with your mother's milk but, if I may say so, with your high school teachers' milk [laughter]. So forgive me if I become somewhat trivial. What I am trying to do, in other words, is this: you have read frequently that there is a climate of opinion, an atmosphere, and there are many other terms of this nature, you know,[23] of which we are as little aware[24] [as we are] of the air without which we could not possibly breathe and live. Now I think it is a very important task for thinking people to make explicit, to make conscious, that which we tacitly presuppose all the time. I

[xix] See, e.g., Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 vols. (Routledge, 1945).

[xx] The Great Society was a set of domestic programs proposed or enacted in the United States on the initiative of President Lyndon B. Johnson starting in 1964 after the passage of the Civil Rights. The programs were wide-ranging, and the social problems they sought sought to address included elementary education, the protection of civil rights, the "War on Poverty," housing, immigration, environmental protection, and Medicare.

[xxi] Orlando Wilson was Chicago's Police Commissioner at the time.

believe that is not the function of cultural anthropology and other sciences but of a much more humble and practical thing.

Now let me begin to try to make this clear, because the atmosphere which surrounds us, in which we live, is not a matter of today or yesterday. This has a long prehistory, and we must have some rough understanding of that history if we want to have a proper understanding of that very atmosphere. Now I begin at the beginning again. Political philosophy, I said, is the quest for the good society—of course, the society good for man, meaning in accordance with the requirements of man's nature. There are certain things which man needs by nature in order to be truly man, truly a human being. And this implies that man has by nature certain ends. Well, you see it immediately in the case of the elementary needs like food and so on, but it applies also perhaps to other things. In this respect there is no difference between man and the other animals. But man's ends, the ends natural to man, are peculiar to him. Let us take the example of medicine, concerned with health, and it is here understood that health is good, and a good which is a natural good, meaning good not by virtue of a fashion or of any human agreement, propaganda and the like, but a good which our nature if unimpeded desires. There is also—and that is of course a more interesting case—a health of the soul, of which we speak analogously to the health of the body not merely in the sense in which psychiatry presupposes this, but in a larger sense. For example, a perfectly well-adjusted promoter of legal merchandise does not necessarily possess a healthy soul in the stricter sense, although he may not need any psychiatric treatment because he functions so well. Health of the soul, that was understood as possessing and practicing the virtues.

Now virtues—one could also sweeten that bitter word by saying excellences, but I don't see why one should sweeten it. I don't think that virtue is a word which one must avoid at all cost. But I will illustrate only by enumerating some of the virtues of which people talk: courage, moderation, justice, magnanimity, gentleness, thoughtfulness, and so on. The virtues and their practice are the natural ends of the human soul, and they are the end *par excellence* of man. Since a political community is a community of men, the highest task of political community is then the concern with the virtue of its members. Not every political community is able or willing to be so concerned, and therefore there are a variety of kinds of political communities, what[25] [were] called regimes. There are regimes dedicated to other ends, say, to the acquisition of wealth and to the enjoyment of wealth, and to virtue only to the extent to which it is necessary to have some decency against fraud and forging of checks, and so on. This is also possible. But since there is a variety of such regimes, and they determine the character, the intention, the overriding concern of a society, they are the primary subject of political science in the older sense of the term. We know this today; that we understand immediately. For example, today we look at the political map, we see the conflict between liberal democracy and communism and the various things in between which can easily be figured out on the basis of these two extremes. So in other words, this task of political science is perhaps not sufficiently alive within the profession but can be made clear immediately on the basis of what we all politically know and are above all concerned with. This variety of the regimes by itself, which existed at all times,[26] gives, we can say, the first impulse toward the guiding question of political philosophy, namely, the question of the best regime, because strange as it may sound, every regime that ever was, is, and will be claims explicitly or implicitly that it is the best. I'm perfectly willing to argue that out if you have any doubt about that; now I merely assert it. And for some strange reason, loyalty to a

regime, full dedication to it, induces most men to say that [their] regime is the finest thing that ever was, and therefore our full loyalty, our full dedication, is properly given to it. Good.

Now this, what I said up to now, was a very rough sketch of political philosophy as understood by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and quite a few—in fact, very many other philosophers, both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. For convenience sake I call that classical political philosophy. Now the crucial presupposition of classical political philosophy was, as you might have observed, that there are natural ends of man which have a natural order. In other words, there is not a chaos of ends[27] but there is a hierarchy of ends, because if there were a variety of ends with no order, then we would be of course confused all the time; there wouldn't be natural ends in any reasonable sense. Now this notion that there are natural ends of man went together with the notion that there are natural ends in nature generally speaking. So to that extent, classical political philosophy is based on a certain kind of natural science. Since the word natural science has taken on such a specific meaning in modern times, I will use an older term, the Greek term, and will speak of *physiologia*,[28] [LS writes on the blackboard] which means the speech, the discussion, of *physis*, of nature. Now this was done, elaborated by the classical philosophers, and there were certain difficulties because, as is shown by the fact that Plato and Aristotle in particular did not entirely agree as to that *physiologia* and above all, and in a way most interesting of all, there were philosophers in classical antiquity who developed a *physiologia* which was not teleological, which denied that there are natural ends. And the most famous representatives of this view are Democritus and Epicurus. I mention these names advisedly, Democritus and Epicurus. Democritus prior to Plato, Epicurus after.

Now let us consider for one moment the effect which this grave question, teleological or non-teleological *physiologia*, has on political philosophy. In the Epicurean tradition there is no political philosophy, i.e., there is no quest for the best regime. It is in this strict sense unpolitical. They are students of nature seeking their happiness, each privately or in small groups of friends, but [have] no serious concern for the polis. Now the reason for this is not that the Epicureans denied natural ends of all men. In a way, they denied it strictly speaking, but in another sense they did not deny it for they made this assertion: that the good is identical with the pleasant. And the pleasant is of course then a natural end. Now the first step leading from that is that we have to choose the more pleasant rather than the more painful, and so on: a calculation of pleasures and pains, a sort of a felicific calculus, as it was called by Bentham much later. But it culminated in the Epicurean doctrine in the view that there is a maximum pleasure, a highest pleasure, which is indeed obtainable only through philosophy—which has nothing to do with the polis, with the city, except in a very secondary way, but philosophy is its condition. Now, why then was there no political philosophy strictly speaking, although there was something like a teleology in Epicurean thought? And we can state it very simply: political philosophy—premodern, classical political philosophy—is based on the fundamental premise that the moral, as we would say, is fundamentally different from the pleasant. And now let me retranslate that into Greek. *To kalon*, the noble or fine, is something fundamentally different from the pleasant. Virtue is choiceworthy for its own sake because of its intrinsic nobility; it is not to be chosen because it is productive of pleasure as the Epicureans said. Now this much, or this little, about classical political philosophy.

I must now explain very briefly, very summarily, very cursorily, the peculiarity of modern political philosophy which created that climate, that atmosphere of which I spoke. [29]Modern

political philosophy emerged through a clear break with classical philosophy, through a deep sense of dissatisfaction. The first great event was Machiavelli, and in Machiavelli the clearest and most accessible statement is in his *Prince*, chapter 15. One can restate what Machiavelli says there as follows: the classics, Plato and Aristotle above all, had said that the best regime, the regime dedicated to virtue, is possible—otherwise only a fool would strive for it—but not necessarily ever actual. It is an object of wish or prayer—of the wish or prayer of reasonable men, of course—but although it is likely never to be actual, it is indispensable as a standard for judging properly of the various imperfect societies in which men live. How could we diagnose this imperfection if we did not have a standard of perfection? Now Machiavelli's point is this: according to Plato and Aristotle the best regime is said to be according to nature, according to the requirements of human nature. But can it be according to nature if it never, or hardly ever, exists? Must there not be a natural obstacle to it which prevents it from coming into being most of the time? Now the ground of the error of the classics, according to Machiavelli, is this: they took their bearings by virtue, by how men should live or how they ought to live. And this leads to the result that we get a wholly useless—as later men would say, a wholly utopian—fantastic political philosophy. The only sane thing to do is to change one's orientation radically and to take one's bearings by how men do live. Down to earth. We may loosely call this realism. Machiavelli opposes this realism to the idealism of Plato, Aristotle, and so on. Machiavelli calls these best regimes the imaginary kingdoms or principalities, and by this he means not merely Plato and Aristotle but also the biblical tradition. The kingdom of God would be from his point of view, although he doesn't say so, an imaginary kingdom. Now this simple step, which I believe every one of you[30] is familiar with, became effective on a large scale only by the intervention of some great successors of Machiavelli, men who have not the bad reputation which Machiavelli in a way still has—in other words, they were more sober, more cautious, but nevertheless they built on Machiavelli's foundation.

Now in this further elaboration, use was made of a concept which I have not yet had occasion to mention: the concept of a natural law in the sense of a normative law. This notion that there is a natural law as a normative law is one possible interpretation of classical political philosophy—it's not Plato and not Aristotle, but to some extent the Stoics and above all the Scholastics. To simplify matters, according to the Thomists' doctrine of natural law, which is the most renowned, natural law[31] consists as it were of three parts corresponding to three kinds of natural inclinations of men. Inclination means here always inclination toward an end, not in the sense in which the word is now used. And these three inclinations are: self-preservation; preservation of the species and therefore also of the political society; and knowledge. Knowledge. And of course knowledge, and in the second place, society, are higher in rank than self-preservation; and therefore the whole importance of virtue is implied in the fact that knowledge and society are higher than the individual and his self-preservation.

Now what was done as a consequence of Machiavelli, in the first place by Hobbes, was to say this: we do need a natural law. That's for Hobbes a matter of course, as it is for Locke after him. But not these higher stories: the lowest is the only thing which we need—the lowest, the desire for self-preservation. The lowest and therefore the most dependable. And if we build the whole edifice of natural law on the most defensible basis then it will be much more valuable, much more solid, than the traditional doctrine which regarded it only, as it were, as an introduction to the higher. The practical consequence is (which is not in this form drawn by Hobbes but only by

Locke) that the political society or the state has as such no concern whatever with virtue and vice. It is concerned with peace, with law and order, but virtue and vice is none of its business. And of course this leads to very great questions up to the present day. For example, you know the Berkeley demonstrations,[xxii] where freedom of speech and obscenity of speech was especially demanded. Is the prohibition against obscenity not a concern with virtue, and a concern with virtue is not political concern, up to the present day?

[32]It is a complicated thing, in a way, this new kind of natural right, the classics of which are Hobbes and Locke: this new doctrine is hedonistic and in this respect akin to the Epicureans. But there is one radical difference between these modern hedonists and the Epicureans and any other earlier hedonists. Hobbes and Locke deny that there is a highest good as the Epicureans had asserted, there is no *summum bonum*. And connected with this, in a way which I cannot now show, is the fact that the old hedonism was radically unpolitical, whereas the new hedonism is radically political. Generally speaking, in premodern times you had, say, an idealistic tradition, which is political, and a hedonistic tradition, which was nonpolitical. Now in the seventeenth century a merger of these two traditions takes place: a political hedonism. And that is one of the greatest changes which has ever happened, and of course up to the present day this determines us, with many modifications which would lead us too far.

Now the full development of these things which I have only here sketched presupposed a break with premodern *physiologia*, and this is the side of it which is best known because it is most obvious. This break with premodern *physiologia* took place after Machiavelli, generations after Machiavelli. And yet we have the strange thing that the first great break still took place under the presupposition of the old kinds of *physiologi*a, be it Aristotelian or any other. But then we have this great change which we all [33][associate] in the first place with Galileo. Now let us turn to this break with premodern *physiologia*, and again I limit myself to the most simple and superficial side of the matter. What would strike everyone concerned with knowledge of nature would be the fact that there is such a variety of doctrines. Platonic doctrine of nature is not Aristotelian, and that is not Stoic, and that is not Epicurean, and *n* others, possibly—a disgraceful variety, a chaos. And this leads in itself, and had led already in antiquity, to skepticism. If a pursuit is feasible then there will be agreement. The mere fact of disagreement shows that this is impossible. But there was one beacon for some men who were concerned with *physiologia*, and that was that there existed a science which in spite of all skepticism functioned where there was no division into schools, and that was of course mathematics. So what these men then were striving after was a new kind of *physiologia*, which would be, if I may say so, as metaphysically neutral as mathematics. That had never existed before: mathematics is an old story, but there was no Platonic mathematics, Aristotelian mathematics, Epicurean mathematics. [There were] different degrees to which they were interested in mathematics, that's another matter, but now the attempt was made, taking mathematics as a model, to produce such a *physiologia* where all competent men would agree, just as they agreed in mathematics. Now the result was modern physics, which is as nonteleological as Epicurean physics but is distinguished from Epicurean physics by its mathematical character, which, if we want to seek the source, is rather to be found in Plato than in any of the other great Greek men. But here again we must not make the mistake

[xxii] The Berkeley Free Speech Movement began in 1964 at the University of California, Berkeley when students opposed a campus ban on political activity.

of superficial people and say: Well, here you have a combination of Epicureanism with Platonism, as if this were not precisely the problem: How can you bring water and fire together? I mean, in most cases these compromises, eclectic compromises, are just despicable, a proper object of compassion because people are in trouble and try to make the best of it. But those combinations which are of utmost importance are those that come about by the thinker in question putting the question on a novel basis, where the whole issue looks different than it did before. And this discovery of the new basis, this creative act, is the important thing, much more important than what he took from source A and what he took from source B. I said a combination of Epicurean physics with mathematics, yet this mathematical character as it were increased the nonteleological character of modern physics. That is in itself a rather enigmatic statement; in order to understand it, you would have to read the Second Book of Aristotle's *Physics*, where he speaks of the relation between mathematical and teleological necessity.

However this may be, the final result of this development, taking together both the new physics and what came[34] from Machiavelli and his[35] [successors]: there is no natural standard whatever. There is no natural standard whatever. All these older schools, with the exception of Skeptics, who denied any standard, had said there is a natural standard.[36] But we need a standard. Where can we get it? And the classic modern answer, given long after Hobbes and Locke had done their work, was given by Kant: the standard comes from reason as distinguished from nature. Now I will show briefly how this is connected with modern natural right based on self-preservation alone. Now, if the fundamental instinct, urge, or however we may call it . . . of man is self-preservation and nothing else, then man is not by nature a social being. He becomes social because he finds out he cannot preserve himself well without living in an organized society. But by nature he is not social; yet he still remains, for Hobbes and Locke, the rational animal. And that is perhaps the simplest formula one can give for this kind of philosophy: the rationality of man is maintained; his sociality, his natural sociality, is denied. Now[37] that implies of course that since man is not by nature social that man strictly speaking precedes society, a thought which has disappeared—in this case one must say happily—but still we must understand it, because in indirect ways this notion still lives: all modern individualism is originally based on this view that man precedes society. And these isolated men without any social bonds come together in order freely to establish society. Men, and the state in which man[38] [was] before he entered society came then to be called the state of nature—not an ancient term. Man's natural right is the right which man has in the state of nature, i.e., in the presocial state. But if you look, this was very clear in Hobbes but then if you look a bit more closely at the state of nature and at these premises (and that was done not before Rousseau), the state of nature eventually proved then to be a subhuman state: the state of a stupid animal, not a state of man. Now, if in the state of nature we find man as a stupid animal and not yet man, how can the state of nature supply standards for a human life? So one has to abandon the orientation by nature; reason takes its place. And that[39] was done decisively by Kant: reason divorced from the tutelage of nature, as Kant called it.[xxiii]

Now the practical importance of this step was immense, as you see from the following consideration. In former times, prior to Kant, it was always possible to argue against people who[40] were very sanguine regarding what you could do with human society: Well, human nature puts a limit to that. You know there is something in man which will prevent a society without

[xxiii] Immanuel Kant, "Remark," in *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786).

any flaws.[41] But if nature, human nature, is in no way to be considered in the establishment of the idea, if only reason is considered, the situation becomes very different. The implication of what Kant says is that man is of infinite malleability,[42] that there is no human nature to speak of, so that we cannot know how far progress, especially social progress, may go. And this has of course had a tremendous effect up to the present day: people who would be horrified by the thought that they owe anything to Kant do owe [him] this crucial point[43].

Now reason as Kant understood it, which fulfills this function, must be pure reason because if it is not pure reason, if it is based on experience, then man hitherto becomes again[44] the standard. So if we want to have, say, a perfectly just society, we must base it on pure reason alone. Man is the rational animal, that is still the same. But how [did] it [happen][45] that men never knew these true standards[46] [until] now? Take the simple and trite example of Aristotle, who was as bright and as philanthropic as Kant and yet thought that slavery is not against nature and not against right, whereas Kant and Locke of course deny that.[47] [Why have] the true rational standards become known only now, meaning [the] late eighteenth century? The answer: reason discovers the true standards only in a long process of emancipation from the natural bonds, a long process of enlightenment. The true standards become known only as a result of an extensive historical process. The true standards have now become known, say, in 1800 because the historical process is in the decisive respect completed, because if we know the true standards with perfect lucidity, then there is of course an infinite task[48] [of putting] them into practice that may take centuries, if not millennia; but as far as the human mind itself is concerned, we know the maximum we can possibly wish to know. We are sitting at the peak of the world. The individual is the son of his age, as was said shortly after Kant,[xxiv] only if he is the son of the age of reason. *The Age of Reason* is a well-known book by Tom Paine. Only if he is the son of the age of reason can he know the rational order of society; but then he will know it unless he is terribly lazy, or wicked.

I will skip a long story (I must skip it) and I will only say what happened, the next great step which affects us. Many of the things effected today you will have recognized by these ancient stories. But the very great step which was taken in the course of the nineteenth century, after men like Kant and Hegel had done their work, was this: Is the historical process ever completed? Is the knowledge of the standards ever perfectly rational? And if not, what happens? If we are always in the midst of the historical current [or] stream, if we are all the sons of our age, we are bound by the limitations of our age,[49] and that means of course that we are as much under the spell of prejudices as our benighted ancestors. And this will be so as long as there will be human beings. And the notion that this means less and less prejudice—more benighted and less benighted and so on—but how do we know that this notion of progress is not an idea belonging to a particular age which has its time and will finally have the fate of all such ideas?[50] Now this position, this view which is very powerful today, I call (and not only I call) historicism, meaning that all human thought depends ultimately on principles which essentially belong to an age and which cannot be criticized with reference to a higher standard.

Now this historicism—we may have to come back to that on the proper occasion, but historicism affects social science in general and political science in particular but is not the most powerful ingredient of social science. That most powerful ingredient is what I call positivism. Positivism

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[xxiv] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (1837), Preface.

is the view according to which there is only one way to knowledge, and that is science in the sense in which science is understood now. So that's a long story, positivism. Positivism disposes of political philosophy in a very simple, and one can even say elegant, way. All science has to do with facts, relations of facts, correlations, functions, and what have you. But facts are something radically different from values. Regarding values, no knowledge whatever is possible except of course the knowledge that Mr. A cherishes value Alpha. But this is not knowledge of values; it's not knowledge that value Alpha deserves to be cherished. This is the version, I take it, with which you have [all] been[51] imbued from a very early age, and so I do not have to labor this point. Now despite[52] the almost overwhelming power of positivism and historicism in our age, the simple reasoning leading up to political philosophy—a reasoning which I sketched—has not lost its primary evidence, and therefore we see time and again people, also young people, rebel more or less strongly against this value-free or valueless conception of social science. But this primary evidence doubtless needs now some external support against this terrific steamroller, which [53][threatens] to bury everything else. And that, I think, is the reason why it is a good thought to study Plato: in order to clarify and to strengthen the primary evidence in favor of the concern with the good society.

[54]We shall study, if all goes well, the *Apology* and the *Crito*, and we shall proceed roughly in this way: Mr. Reinken will be so good to read a very short passage in the English translation, and then I will comment on it. And so we will go over the whole ground. In other words, we will read the two books with greater care than it is ordinarily done. I'm not speaking now of what classical scholars do, but classical scholars do not have the obligation to face historicism and positivism which a member of a political science department faces.[55] In other words, we will all undergo for the first time or continue a training in how to read worthwhile books. And here I appeal also to a very common experience. You know that today the trend is towards reading very much and very fast. I have seen syllabi of courses, of single-quarter courses, which no student can comply with unless he reads very much, and that means of course, given the finiteness of man, very fast. And there must be some place or places in which this trend is counteracted by an attempt to read little and slowly.[56] I do not know how long it will take us. I suppose we will not have much time, if any time, after we are through with these two dialogues; but if we have some time left, which is possible, then I would give a short discussion of Xenophon's treatment of the accusation of Socrates, because that would be of some interest: a contemporary, and a great contemporary of Plato, who presents the issue apparently in a very different way, and this might be helpful. But I cannot promise anything. If Mr. Reinken's watch is dependable, we have four minutes.

Mr. Reinken: Six.

LS: Six minutes, I see. . . . Are there any questions?

Student: You had said before you would give an answer to the criticism of the *Apology* as a lie.

LS: Well, what do you mean by that?

Student: Well, it seems to me that the argument that you raised against the *Apology*, that it is a lie—it can't be answered by the argument that it's a work of art, it went unanswered. In other words it seemed to me—

LS: But we cannot answer that. And I would say this very provisionally. I would say we must make distinctions; this time a distinction made by Plato himself between base lies and noble lies. So if the *Apology* is a lie it is likely to be a noble lie. That would be the general line of defense[57] which I said I would take. Is this satisfactory for the time being? Yes?

Student: Well, you might speak a bit more about the unity of mathematics and . . . .

LS: The unity?

Student: The agreement that mathematicians seem to have about their own science.

LS: Well, this was a point when you read, for example, Descartes. The situation today is, I'm sure, different; but in Descartes' time the situation was very clear. Take Euclid. There was no question [that] Euclid[58] was the real stuff—I mean, there could be no doubt about that. [59]If you spoke mathematically, you accepted him or Archimedes, or whoever it was, whereas if, when you spoke of nature, there were the great controversies between the great schools—[of] Plato, Aristotle, the Stoa, Epicureans and so on in this simple sense. I mean, the complications which have arisen since the emergence of a non-Euclidean geometry and so on, that was not . . . . Today the situation is visibly very different. The mere fact that today physics is a metaphysically neutral science is part of the establishment. I mean, that—originally that was a a great miracle that such a thing could happen. And we do not do justice to Galileo and his successors if we do not see first the paradoxy of this . . . . Simply stated, what the people in the seventeenth century wanted, like Galileo and Descartes, was to replace a false [philosophy] or false philosophies by the true philosophy. Or more precisely, philosophy and science are synonymous terms up to this time. They tried to replace a false, a pseudo-philosophy and pseudo-science of Aristotle and so on [60]by a true philosophy or science. [LS repeatedly taps on the table] The result was—which became fully clear only in the eighteenth century—[that] this enormous experiment was successful up to a point. And now in the eighteenth century, roughly, people began to say: Let us call the successful part science and the failing part philosophy. [Laughter] And that's up to the present-day, because what people who are entirely wedded to science call philosophy is not philosophy: that's something [else], a branch of mathematics. Then again, this is a provisional answer. Now this is the last question.

Student: In the[61] early parts of your introduction before you brought up the question of the sources of Socrates, you said, I believe, that if the modern democracy has worked out the problem of what I take is private morals and public morals, that this presupposes an elaboration in history of the—

LS: Not from Hegel's point of view, I would say. And that is simple, even independently of Hegel one cannot defend[62] that this modern solution, say, modern liberal democracy, presupposed that this conflict between Socrates and the city, between philosophy and the non-philosophers, was carried out in all directions as it were until only one way remained which one

might try, and which was then tried in the seventeenth century. To make it a tiny bit more concrete, philosophy as understood by the classics is of use, of direct use only to the philosophers themselves. I mean, indirectly of course they can give good advice to other people, but the philosophers alone become happy through philosophy; the others don't become happy; they become a bit wiser if they listen to philosophers. Now, what in the seventeenth century happened can be said as follows: philosophy can make non-philosophers happy. How? Because the new philosophy or science is in the service of conquering nature—disease, death, and what have you—and that by spreading these benefits, including deodorants, it makes everybody happy. And of course that is a nasty exaggeration of mine, but you understand it. And this is one of the key points: that science can now link up with what we call technology, whereas prior to that there was no essential link between science and technology.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "There are a few chairs probably available in the departmental ante-chambre, so if someone is there . . . You know where the departmental office is? There are some chairs around and you might try to pick them up. Which number is it, 309? No, 307. 306."
[2] Deleted Apology of Socrates.
[3] Deleted "in."

[4] Deleted "What happens— Mrs. Berns, is there some . . . . "
[5] Deleted "of."

[6] Deleted "but I mean that you…."

[7] Deleted "For there is, a."

[8] Deleted "Now I wish I could be of any help to you. So many chairs—if room 301 is not used, there are plenty of chairs there.

[9] Deleted "not self evident."

[10] Deleted "This whole—the—the—."

[11] Deleted "way."

[12] Deleted "like…."

[13] Deleted "presupposes…."
[14] Deleted "who then and"
[15] Moved "finally."

[16] Deleted "be."

[17] Deleted "with,".

[18] Deleted "with which all action…."

[19] Deleted "has…."

[20] Deleted "it is hard to avoid."

[21] Deleted "they use also."

[22] Deleted "and we will…."

[23] Deleted "In which…."

[24] Deleted "in which we are ordinarily."
[25] Deleted "was."

[26] Deleted “is—.”

[27] Deleted “there is not—.”

[28] Deleted “—please—.”

[29] Deleted “Now, can you give me a watch, because—thank you.”
[30] Deleted “has….”

[31] Deleted “has, had.”

[32] Deleted “In a way—.”

[33] Deleted “think of.”
[34] Deleted “out.”

[35] Deleted “succession.”

[36] Deleted “Now what then shall.”

[37] Deleted “and.”

[38] Deleted “is.”

[39] Deleted “is done.”

[40] Deleted “had….”

[41] Deleted “Now.”

[42] Deleted “And he cannot, so.”

[43] Deleted “upon themself.”

[44] Deleted “slips in and becomes.”

[45] Changed from “But how does it come.”

[46] Deleted “except.”

[47] Deleted “How come that this.”

[48] Deleted “to put.”

[49] Deleted “and why should.”

[50] Deleted “This is the end of this. Yes.”

[51] Moved “all.”

[52] Deleted “of.”

[53] Deleted “threatened.”
[54] Deleted “Now I mention finally another point.”

[55] Deleted “And.”

[56] Deleted “If we find.”

[57] Deleted “of what I said.”

[58] Moved “that.”

[59] Deleted “I mean.”
[60] Deleted “by the true.”
[61] Deleted “introduction, in your."

[62] Deleted “that,”

Session 2: October 20, 1966

Leo Strauss: Now let us begin. In my introduction I have tried to explain with what expectations and concerns of our own we approach the *Apology of Socrates* and the *Crito*. Now today we shall turn to these Platonic works themselves. The procedure which we shall follow from now on is this: first Mr. Reinken will read to you a passage in Fowler's translation. Then I shall give a general explanation of the passage concerned, and finally I shall speak of particular expressions which seem to be in special need of a special discussion. From time to time I shall refer[1] [for] support and otherwise to the commentary by John Burnet. Burnet was the editor of Plato, an outstanding authority;[i] yet I am compelled to question some of his fundamental assumptions, assumptions not peculiar to him but which seem to be characteristic obstacles to our understanding of Plato and therefore worthy of some discussion. I will give you a single illustration. Burnet has been very much concerned both in his commentaries and in his history of Greek philosophy with the question of the historical Socrates as distinguished from, say, the Platonic Socrates—the legendary Socrates one could say. And for this purpose one must, of course—in order to find out the true historical Socrates in contradistinction to the legendary Socrates, one must of course use extra-Platonic sources, and among them[2] Aristophanes's comedy the *Clouds*, which is referred to in the very text of the *Apology*. Now Burnet had the merit to take the *Clouds* much more seriously than most students. He rightly insisted on the fact that the comedy is of course not a historical report and therefore one must be cautious. The historical report would give us facts and a comedy gives us jokes. And therefore this is one special difficulty—unfortunately he goes beyond this; he says, "quote, Statements of fact are not funny, unquote."[ii] [Laughter] Now this is a consequence of the fact-value distinction, because "funny" is surely a predicate of value [laughter]. It may be a negative value, but still it is not neutral. And I do not know whether Burnet knew it was a consequence of the fact-value distinction, but in fact it is.

Now let us briefly consider this consequence or implication of the fact-value distinction. Is it true, as Burnet asserts, that statements of fact are never funny? Is it true? It would be true if there were never funny facts. [Laughter] We all know that there are funny facts. One could say—as I see from your reaction—the very statement "Statements of fact are not funny" is itself a funny fact. [Laughter] I give you another example in the late Mort Grodzins book on loyalty, which some of you will know, which is strictly scientific a book. He gives as an example in order to elucidate the problem of loyalty a story of waiters in fashionable downtown restaurants who have a kind of spitting contest—of course behind the scenes—who can spit best from one wall to the next where the cocktails are located.[iii] [Laughter] Now this is, I must say, also a funny fact. [Laughter] It may not exhaust the description; it may also be criminal in fact, for all I know, but in itself it doubtless has some funny qualities. So with this minor reminder of the limitations of

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[i] John Burnet (1863-1928), Scottish classicist. His works on Greek philosophy include *Early Greek Philosophy* (1892).

[ii] John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy, Part I: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1914), 145.

[iii] Morton Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 185. In Grodzins's book, this anecdote involves spitting into a bowl of salad dressing rather than cocktails.

Burnet's interpretation, we turn to the text. And now Mr. Reinken will be so good—and you are requested to open your books, too—to read the beginning of the *Apology*. You read until I say stop, yes?

Mr. Reinken: Yes. The Defense of Socrates.

> How you, men of Athens, have been affected by my accusers, I do not know. But I, for my part, almost forgot my own identity, so persuasively did they talk; and yet, there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said. But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me because I was a clever speaker. For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed because they will immediately be convicted by me of falsehood, by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be not in the least a clever speaker, unless indeed they call him a clever speaker who speaks the truth. For if this is what they mean, I would agree that I am an orator, not after their fashion. Now they, as I say, have said little or nothing true, but you shall hear from me nothing but the truth. Not, however, men of Athens, speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are, nor carefully arranged, but you will hear things said at random with the words that happen to occur to me. For I trust that what I say is just; and let none of you expect anything else. For surely, it would not be fitting for one of my age to come before you like a youngster making up speeches. And, men of Athens, I urgently beg and beseech you, if you hear me making my defence with the same words with which I have been accustomed to speak both in the marketplace at the bankers' tables, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, not to be surprised or to make a disturbance in this account. For the fact is that this is the first time I have come before the court, although I am seventy years old; I am, therefore, an utter foreigner to the manner of speech here. Hence, just as you would, of course, if I were really a foreigner, pardon me if I spoke it that dialect, in that manner in which I had been brought up, so now I make this request of you, a fair one as it seems to me, that you disregard the manner of my speech—for perhaps it might be worse, and perhaps better—and observe and pay attention merely to this: whether what I say is just, or not; for that is the virtue of a judge, and an orator's virtue is to speak the truth. (17a-18a)[iv]

LS: Thank you. Good. Here now let us stop. Now there[3] [were] the judges, or the jurors—the same thing in this connection, in this context—were a large number, say, 500 or more. So this is perhaps therefore the reference to not making noises, making disturbances,[4] this would not be contempt of court, but would be an action of the court. Good. Now the main point which Socrates seems here to make here is this. The accusers are clever liars. In opposition to them, Socrates is a simple-minded teller of the truth. Now if we generalize from that, the accusers are unjust, Socrates is just. And this simple opposition is elaborated by Plato in the Second Book of the *Republic* in a speech by Glaucon, not by Socrates, about the radical difference between the

[iv] Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966).

thoroughly unjust and the thoroughly just man.[v] But this is in a way here presupposed or implied: that there is such a radical and clear-cut difference. But more precisely, Socrates says the accusers are clever liars. The most impudent lie is their saying that Socrates is a clever liar. You see how he turns around: here you have a clever liar and here you have a simple-minded mensch. Now the clever liars don't leave it at that; they of course say that they are not clever liars and say that [the] defendant is a clever liar. But this is the most impudent lie according to Socrates because[5] [he] will show here and now that he is not at all clever in speech, which implies one thing: they have said Socrates is a clever liar. And Socrates says: No, wait, after you have heard me speak. What is the consequence of that? That the accusers are not clever liars because they will be refuted in half an hour, or an hour. [Laughter] So[6] the situation is more complicated than one thinks at first glance. In opposition to the accusers who are clever liars, Socrates is a straightforward teller of the truth who avoids all artifices and fireworks. Socrates will tell the whole truth, as he says here and repeats frequently and, we may add, nothing but the truth. And now, why will he say the truth? And the first explanation he gives is this: he trusts that what he says are just things, in 17c2 to 3. What does he imply? That the just things are most effective without any embellishment, without any fireworks or artifices. Let us take another example, disregarding Socrates. A man who defends himself: I did not kill him; he was indeed killed[7] with my gun, and I have no alibi. So here this is a man who says the just thing—let us assume that this is the situation.[8] Would such a man be able to overcome prejudice by merely saying these three things and sitting down? Especially in the case, which is likely, that the jury is prejudiced against him because the prosecutor will make the most of these three things I mentioned, these points I mention—I mean, that it was his gun and he doesn't have an alibi. So there is obviously some difficulty in this suggestion of Socrates: if you have a clean case you don't need artifice. That is not as simple.

The second point which Socrates makes is: any artifices would not become a man of his old age. That's entirely different, so that may very well be true. So Socrates will then speak without adornment.[9] Very tacitly, as he says, not out of disrespect for the court but out of respect for it. We understand that. He avoids all artifices; he will use the same speeches in his defense which he was accustomed to use both in the market place at the bankers' table, "where many of you have heard" him, "and elsewhere." Now here we must observe this difference. We do not know, of course, how many have heard Socrates in the market place, because he doesn't say "All of you have heard me"; [but] "many of you." [We] don't know how many. We are sure, however, that not many had heard him speak elsewhere, because[10] the "many" doesn't refer to that; the many refers only to those who have heard him in the marketplace. Now the other places are in the *gymnasia*, you know, where he went, the training grounds where he talked to the adolescents, and so on. This brings up the question for which we are not yet fully prepared, but which I mention, the question of the locales of Plato's dialogues as described in the *Apology* on the one hand, and as presented in all other dialogues on the other. Now this in passing. In his speech here he continues his point regarding his old age[11], he says he could not speak differently than he will speak, for he has never before been before a court of law, and therefore he doesn't know forensic speech. A question: Does one have to have been a defendant in order to know how to speak in a courtroom? I ask you. Well, yes?

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[v] *Republic* 360e1-361d4.

Student: He might have been one of the judges at one time.

LS: Yes, a matter of fact, later on he will mention the fact that he was one of the judges in the trial of the generals, the battle of Arginusae.[vi] Very well. So this is then not a very convincing reasoning. I will come back to that later. I would like bring up first one point which occurs at the end of what we just read. The jury should apply their mind to whether he says just things or not, meaning all non-just things, unjust things, for this is a virtue of the judge: to see whether the speaker says just things, whereas it is the duty of the speaker, of the orator, to say the true things. Now what Socrates does here is (and also elsewhere, but not everywhere) is simply to identify the just things with the true things. This we have to consider, that identification, that unqualified identification for a moment. As you will know, and as you will hear ad nauseam later, Socrates was accused of not believing in the gods of the city of Athens. Now then let us assume these gods are not true gods: then of course Socrates would be guilty. And if he would say: No, I don't believe in these, in the gods as you generally understand them, then he would say the truth. But would he say the just things? The most superficial but[12] in a way [the] most practically important meaning of the just things [is that they] are the things prescribed by law, the legal things. Now if the law prescribes that you must recognize and revere the gods as worshipped by the city, then clearly the just, in the sense of legal, and the true would be very different. There is a profound ambiguity here.

Now what strikes us first in this whole speech (at least me) is Socrates's two-fold reference to his old age, and which explains his way of speaking. It would be unbecoming for a man of his age to speak cleverly. Now if it is only unbecoming, it means of course he could speak cleverly if he wished. I mean, there are old men who have no sense of dignity and propriety and try to behave like adolescents, and Socrates could do the same.[13] So in this first case he could speak cleverly if he wished, but later on when he speaks for the second time of his old age, he says he could not speak cleverly even if he wished because of his lack of forensic experience. So here these are clearly two incompatible alternatives: he could speak cleverly if he wished, but it would be improper; and he could not speak cleverly even if he wished.

Now which of the two alternatives is more credible: that he could speak cleverly if he wished or that he could not speak cleverly even if he wished? I think we have to give this some thought. What would you say? Well, we have to go into the reasons. The reasons which Socrates gives, that he could not speak cleverly even if he wished, is that he has no forensic experience, and this means most immediately that he has never been a defendant before. But[14] we know that he had been present at judicial proceedings[15] in one case which was mentioned, but [also] in quite a few other cases. Socrates had a certain interest in forensic rhetoric and knew the orators of his day and also the forensic orators. So I suggest provisionally that Socrates could speak cleverly if he wished, but he doesn't wish to. So this shows again that the simple opposition—the accusers are the clever liars and Socrates is a perfectly just man who is incapable of any cleverness, of such utmost simplicity—this is too simple to be true. This alternative from which we started must be abandoned. Unqualified simplicity will not do. Well, some people are compelled to make it do because they are so simple, but if one can help it one cannot leave it at that. And this is not in any way a shocking thought. I remind you of the New Testament[16] [verse about] the simplicity of

[vi] *Apology* 32a10-32c4.

doves and the guile of serpents.[vii] But the more immediate reason for this impossibility of unqualified simplicity is the questionable character of the equation of the just things with the true things. If the just things were identical with the true things, then simplicity might be much more possible than if they are not identical.

So at this point I would like to read to you a comment from Burnet. Another commentator[viii] has made this remark on this introduction: "The introduction 'may be completely paralleled piece by piece, from the Orators.'"[ix] In other words, it follows a convention.[17] Ordinary orators say these kind of things—they, "they have said lies, nothing but lies, and I will tell you the whole truth." This is not a peculiarity of Socrates. Burnet adds to this the following remark: "This observation is true and important, but the conclusion, quote, "that the subtle rhetoric of this defense would ill accord with the historical Socrates," unquote misses the mark[x]. You see here this kind of ghost, the historical Socrates,[18] [and] you don't know how to get hold of him. "The truth is rather that the introduction is amongst other things a parody, and the very disclaimer of all knowledge of forensic diction is itself a parody. It is in fact impossible to doubt that Socrates was perfectly familiar with contemporary rhetoric, and that he thought very little of it." Good. At any rate, a man who can make such a parody is without any question a clever speaker. [Laughter] I mean, it is not a very high degree of it, but he is surely not the perfectly simple-minded man who Socrates presents himself as here.

Now a few points. He addresses the jury or the judges as "you Athenians"—more literally, "you Athenian men," hombres—[and] sometimes only simply "you men" or "men." The ordinary address is "judges," "*andres dikastai*": "You men who are judges." Socrates does not address them as judges; he makes it clear later on toward the end. But this is not unique. I mean, other orators not as sophisticated as Socrates have done the same. At the beginning when he says,[19] "and yet they have said, so to speak, nothing true," that's important. In other words, they are not complete liars—I mean, that would be an exaggeration. And also later he says, "The many thinks they lied." Now the implication of this is of some importance. To say something absolutely untrue is impossible. Does this make sense? I mean, in the practical meaning of the term, of course when you say[20] "we have seen him kill A" and you have not seen it, then you say it's absolutely untrue. In this practical sense you can say something absolutely untrue. But Socrates's meaning goes deeper, or Plato's meaning goes deeper. [21]All lying necessarily makes use of truth. Well, to take the most simple implication, when you say, "I have seen X killing someone," killing doubtless is an occurrence among human beings; without this truth the whole lie would be impossible. That is not so trivial and elementary as it may seem at first sight.
Now there is another point which Burnet makes which I would like to read to you now, regarding this passage [at 17c5] when Socrates[22] [says] that he will not behave like an adolescent, or like a very young man, c5, fashioning speeches.[xi] And he says here, this "'refers not to artificial language, but to falsification.'" Such a young man, "to hide a fault uses falsehood and not

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[vii] Matt. 10: 16
[viii] J. Riddell, *The Apology of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1867). Burnet quotes from xi-xiii.
[ix] *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito,* ed. John Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 146. Hereafter cited in text.
[x] Burnet, 147.
[xi] *Hōsper meirakiōi* in 17c6.

rhetoric."[xii] The young man, Burnet adds, is the naughty boy, the *meirakion*—"the naughty boy, not the youthful orator," and "this is the regular meaning of the expression, *plattein logous*," telling of fashionable speeches.[xiii] But let us consider the context. Socrates will say the whole truth, and he will forego all rhetorical artifices. All right, this is what Burnet implies. Now from this it follows that we have to make a distinction between two different, wholly separate things. And as a consequence a man may say the whole truth and yet use rhetorical devices. And on the other hand a man may not say the whole truth and yet forego rhetorical devices. There should be no difficulty. For example, the man who would lie would not say the whole truth, and yet forego rhetorical devices precisely in order to present himself as a plain, simple man. These are two very different things, but Socrates links up falsehood and rhetoric so strictly that the regular meaning of the phrase to which Burnet refers is not decisive. Socrates implies in the whole context here that[23] using rhetoric, using artifices, is saying the untruth. And we have a very good proof of that, that this can be the Socratic meaning, from the dialogue *Gorgias*, in which there is an extensive presentation of the problem of rhetoric by Socrates toward a rhetorician called Polus in which he condemns rhetoric altogether as a form or kind of flattery, something ignoble and deceptive.[xiv] So this much[24] regarding this passage.

Now one more question regarding 17a: there is a point which Burnet makes of some interest regarding the places where Socrates could be heard: many have heard him in the marketplace, and a few have heard him" ("a few" is my addition) "a few have heard him elsewhere. "Euthyphron" Burnet says, a character in other Platonic dialogues, "is astonished to find Socrates in the marketplace instead of in a suburban gymnasium. Socrates was sometimes to be heard talking in the marketplace at the benches of the bankers," as he says here, "but his regular haunt was the gymnasia. It was there, and not in the marketplace or the streets of Athens, that his serious conversations took place," unquote. (Burnet 1964, 87)[xv] So this is of some importance: what many knew of Socrates was not his serious conversations. They knew the surface of the surface of the surface of Socrates, and if they or someone wanted to know a bit more he would have to meet Socrates "quote elsewhere unquote." And so in that point Burnet only confirms what I have been trying to say. Yes, I think we can leave that. So this much I would like to say about the first part, the proemium, of the *Apology*. Now is there—yes?

Student: Well, I wanted to ask, as far as the connection between rhetoric and untruth: Socrates says at the end of that speech that it's the virtue of the orator to speak the truth, though if the art of the orator is rhetoric, doesn't that contradict what he said previously? In other words, he is implying that rhetoric is tied to—

LS: You know, one can say all right, but one could formally—he didn't use the word rhetor before, did he? I—

Student: He uses it for the orator, I believe—

[xii] Burnet quotes from Riddell (1867), 36.
[xiii] Burnet (1964), 150. In original: "phrase" instead of "expression".
[xiv] *Gorgias* 464b2-466a2.
[xv] Burnet (1964), 87. In original: "in the Market at the tables of the money-changers."

LS: Oh yes, you are quite right—in b6, for example, surely. You are quite right, but he says there, "I would grant that I am an orator not like them": not according to their standards. So in other words, there are—all right, we have to say that there are two kinds of rhetoric, Socratic rhetoric and the bad rhetoric. And Socratic rhetoric consists in saying the truth and nothing but the truth and the whole truth. More we do not get here.

Student: The problem is that's not rhetoric; I mean, if you simply spoke the truth, that would be no different from speech. That would not be rhetoric. That would not be rhetoric.

LS: Ya, but he doesn't speak here of *rhetorike*, of the art of rhetoric; he speaks of an orator. Now some people are by nature orators [and] don't have any training in rhetoric.[25] In other words, the point which you made is good. Whereas according to the discussion in the *Gorgias*, in the section [26][where there] is this long speech of Socrates to Polus, where the impression is created that rhetoric is a sham through and through, and nothing good can come of it. And it's here Socrates admits, as it were, [that] there can be a good way of being an orator. Of course in the *Gorgias* too it becomes very clear when you read a bit on and a bit more carefully that Socrates also there regards rhetoric as a possibly good and respectable thing, although not what most people regard as rhetoric. That's another matter. Yes?

Student: When Socrates is talking about their rhetoric, he says his is not, as theirs is, finely tricked out or carefully arranged, so he seems to indict specifically the fact that what their rhetoric depends upon, what they convey depends upon the careful arrangement of the words and his is not going to be like that. Not—

LS: He just talks there—just whichever word occurs to him, ya.

Student: Which would, which would mean that what he says—

LS: But no artificial—

Student: His rhetoric, yeah, his rhetoric depends more on the substance as opposed to the formal—

LS: But you see that that leads to certain difficulties if you consider that for one moment. If he simply speaks and says just what occurs to him, that could be a terrible disorder, and that would be a very ineffective speech even if all [the] individual points made were true. So he has to proceed in a somewhat orderly manner. And then, as to his taking up any random expression which occurs to him, there are also difficulties because[27] the wrong word may occur to him, and he may use a very ambiguous word that would do more harm than good. Well, and in brief, as we have partly seen and as we will see more and more, this speech is not done at random. And whether maybe Socrates as presented here was such a first rate orator that he needed only twenty minutes' concentrated thinking for planning it, that is impossible to say. But at any rate, he knew in every step what he was doing, and we will see [this] especially in the immediate sequel, when he begins to present to us the plan of his speech, which is the sign of some orderliness. Good. So let us only keep this point in mind which I made at the beginning of this discussion, that the

simple opposition of the clever liar and the simple-minded sayer of the truth is too simple-minded to fit the situation.

Now we come to the next section, 18a7 to 19a7. Will you read?

Mr. Reinken: "First then it is right for me to defend myself against the first false accusations brought against me and the first accusers, and then against the later accusations and the later accusers. For many accusers have risen up against me before you, who have been speaking for a long time, many years already, and saying nothing true; and I fear them more than Anytus and the rest, though these also are dangerous—" (18a7-18b5)

LS: "Anytus and the rest" are the official accusers, as you will see. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "but those others are more dangerous, gentlemen, who gained your belief, since they got hold of most of you in childhood, and accused me without any truth, saying, 'There is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a ponderer over the things in the air and one who has investigated the things beneath the earth—'" (18b 5-18c 1)

LS: "All things beneath the earth."

Mr. Reinken:

> all[xvi] things beneath the earth and who makes the weaker argument the stronger." These, men of Athens, who have spread abroad this report, are my dangerous enemies. For those who hear them think that men who investigate these matters do not even believe in gods. Besides, these accusers are many and have been making their accusations already for a long time, and moreover, they spoke to you at an age at which you would believe them most readily (some of you in youth, most of you in childhood) and the case they prosecuted went utterly by default, since nobody appeared in defence. But the most unreasonable thing of all is this: that it is not even possible to know and speak their names, except when one of them happens to be a writer of comedies. And all those who persuaded you by means of envy and slander—and some also persuaded others because they had been themselves persuaded—all these are most difficult to cope with; for it is not even possible to call any of them up here and cross-question him, but I am compelled in making my defense to fight, as it were, absolutely with shadows and to cross-question when nobody answers. Be kind enough then to bear in mind, as I say, that there are two classes of my accusers: one, those who have just brought their accusation, the other, those who, as I was just saying, brought it long ago, and consider that I must defend myself first against the latter; for you heard them making their charges first and with much greater force than these who made them later. Well then, I must make a defense, men of Athens, I must try in so short a time to remove from you this prejudice which you have been for so long a time acquiring. Now I wish that this might turn out so, if it is better for you and for me, and that I might succeed with my defence; but I think it is difficult, and I am not

[xvi] In original: "the" instead of "all."

> at all deceived about its nature. But nevertheless, let this be as is pleasing to God, the law must be obeyed and I must make a defence. (18c1-19a9)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here. Prejudice is not a Greek word—I mention this in passing—the word is just slander. I mean, the conception of prejudice you can say was implicitly available to the Greek philosophers, but the word doesn't exist there, that comes from the Latin tradition and ultimately even from the legal tradition. But this in passing.

Now Socrates had stated in the proemium in what spirit or with what ethos he will speak. Now he sets forth the subject, the theme, the thesis, of his speech. But is not the theme obvious, namely, Socrates's defense? Of course. Therefore we have to be a bit more precise. He sets forth the plan of his speech; plan means first this, then that, and so on and so on. One must make a division. The question arises: How to divide? Now the defense is meant to refute the indictment, and the indictment itself was clearly divided into two parts, as I say, in advance. It accused Socrates of not believing in the gods of the city and corrupting the young. And Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia*, the first two chapters, draws up the defense of Socrates very properly: first, the charge of impiety, chapter one; and then the charge of corruption, chapter two. But Plato's Socrates does not follow the division of the indictment, for reasons which will appear later. He follows the division not of the indictment but of the indicters, the accusers, the two kinds of accusers. Now the first kind were more important, more dangerous, than the present ones, and he gives some reasons for that. In the first place, their charge, which you have read, that there is a Socrates who investigated things beneath the earth and makes the weaker speech stronger, i.e., teaches you rhetorical tricks, dialectical tricks, their charge leads people to believe that Socrates is simply impious or an atheist. And of course, as we shall see later, the present accusers hadn't done that properly. What they say Socrates says, is simply untrue. Of the present accusers he had said, "They have said, so to speak, nothing untrue."[xvii] Here Socrates is much stricter and says they have said there is nothing true, i.e., he has nothing to do with all these things mentioned by them.

The second point why the first accusers are more dangerous than the present ones is this: the first accusers are many, and have been active for a long time, which implies the present accusers are few and have been active for a short time. The first accusers thus have created a powerful prejudice against Socrates, a prejudice with which the judges are filled. The first accusers must belong, it appears from the context, to the older generation because some of you have been filled with a prejudice against Socrates when you were children or adolescents. Quite a few of these accusers of course might belong to the jury. Quite a few, even if now dead, may have been the fathers of Socrates's judges.

The third point: the first accusers are nameless, except the utterly uninteresting case of a comic poet like Aristophanes, because they make fun and, as we know, funny statements are not to be taken seriously. The first accusers are nameless. Socrates is completely silent as to whether these first accusers were ever contradicted. He creates the impression, surely, that the slander by the first accusers was never contradicted. Now, since they are unknown, Socrates cannot cross-examine them or refute them. That makes sense. Now how important is this fact? Socrates knows

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[xvii] In original: "nothing true." (17a4).

what the first accusers charged him with. Let us repeat that point: there is some Socrates, a certain Socrates, a wise man, who worries about the things aloft and who has investigated all things beneath the earth, and who makes the weaker logos, the weaker speech, into the stronger speech. Socrates knows what he is charged with. Hence he can refute that charge without—who cares who made the charge? He knows the charge. He shows in the sequel, we will hear it soon, that the charge is entirely baseless, or as he put it here, that they have said something which contains not a grain of truth. But why was that charge made at all if it is so entirely baseless? Why did Socrates become the target of a well-nigh universal slander, and of this particular slander? He could have been accused of embezzling public money and that would be something, but he was accused of this thing. Only the first accusers could answer this question. Is it not so? Because they started all of that. So as a consequence, Socrates can defend himself against their charge, but since they are unknown—not even their names are known—they cannot defend themselves against Socrates's refutation. So we listen to Socrates, we hear how he refutes the charge, but we will never hear what the original accusers had to say in support of their accusation. Furthermore, the men who slandered him were many, as he emphasizes.

Now many men had heard him talk at the bankers' tables in the marketplace, as distinguished from other places. Now I make this suggestion, and I am of course eager to discuss it with you: I would bet that Socrates did not worry about the things aloft and investigate the things beneath the earth, et cetera on the marketplace. So the many could not have had any first-hand knowledge of what Socrates did elsewhere, but could they not have heard of what Socrates did elsewhere from others? And perhaps this was distorted on the way to them; that's another matter. However this may be, the first accusers' charge, as brought forward by them, was necessarily baseless because they could not have any direct knowledge of it. But we cannot exclude [this] without considering the evidence, especially the evidence supplied by the *Apology*; there may have been some tiny little wee bit of fire where there was so such smoke. We must see.

Now the first charge, the charge of the first accusers, had certain consequences. The consequence is distinguished from the first charge. In c3 this is made perfectly clear. The first accusers only said that Socrates is investigating these and these things, and so on. But the charge that Socrates does not worship the gods was not made by the first accusers. That is an inference on the part of the listeners. However this may be,[28] perhaps it was an inevitable consequence, when the men went around and said, "there is a Socrates who worries about the things aloft," or, as it is stated in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, "who looks down from on sun and moon," meaning looks down with contempt, sun and moon being divine beings; then such a man cannot worship, cannot have true respect[29] [for] the gods.[xviii]

Now let us consider the charge of the second accusers for one moment. The second accusers said that Socrates does not respect or worship the gods worshipped by the city of Athens. Now compare this with the charge of the first accusers and its inevitable consequence. The first accusers' charge, plus its inevitable consequence, was much graver because here it is said Socrates didn't believe in any gods, and not merely not in the gods of the city. And this is very strange; and by bringing in the first accusers, Socrates therefore aggravates the situation because the first accusers went much further than the second. Yet it shows of course also, one can say, his

[xviii] Aristophanes, *Clouds* 225.

singular honesty: he wants to surprise the audience with all the evidence without holding back anything. He wants to meet the whole charge, not merely the formal charge, which conceivably might be ill drawn up, as we will see later. Yet on the other hand, we must not forget [that] the first accusers cannot rebut Socrates's refutation for the simple reason that they are nameless. They can as little be brought on the witness stand as air.

Now here is another point which Burnet makes, which I would like briefly to discuss. He quotes another commentator, Schanz, who says, "'One thing may be taken as in—incontrovertible, that the aim of every defense must be, before everything else, to weaken the accusation so as to secure an acquittal. If the case of the accused is not a strong one, he will at least attempt to produce an appearance of refutation. But no accused person will amplify still further the counts on which he is being prosecuted, or alter them in such a way as to add substantially to the difficulties of his defense. And yet both these things are done in the *Apology.*'"[xix] This is a remark of an older commentator, which I think is correct. Burnet says, "In other words, Schanz[xx] has made the discovery that the *Apology* is not a defense at all, and he thinks that the aim of Socrates must have been to get off at any cost. The fact remains, however, that he did not get off, though it is clear that he could have done so if he had cared to adopt the line of defense Schanz would have advised. No doubt Lysias"—a famous contemporary orator —"would have given similar advice if there is any truth in the statement that he offered to compose a speech for Socrates to deliver at the trial." And Socrates declined. "The judgment of Grote"—George Grote, *History of Greece*—"is as usual far sounder. He says, 'No one who reads the "Platonic Apology" of Socrates will ever wish that he had made any other defense. But it is the speech of one who deliberately foregoes the immediate purpose of a defense '"—namely, "'persuasion of[30] his judges.'" This much, Grote. "In fact, as Plato represents the matter, Socrates would have been glad to secure an acquittal, if that could be done without stooping to unworthy compromises which would give the lie to his whole life; but he did not believe the object of life was 'to live a given length of time,'"—in other words, to live on and on and on. "That being so his defense was such as it must be."[xxi31] You see there is a difficulty here. We can leave it at the time being at this point.

What Burnet says is quite true as far as it goes, but he omits one important piece of evidence. He discusses at some length the presentation of Socrates's defense as given[32] in[33] Xenophon's *Apology of Socrates*, and so on. I do not have to go into that, but I will take a piece of Platonic evidence. *Gorgias*, 521d6 to 522a8, where Socrates describes many years in advance the situation in which he would be—as could be predicted—he would be accused. And someone to whom he talks, a man called Callicles, accuses him because he would be utterly helpless if accused, and he says to Socrates, "Is it not disgraceful for a man to be utterly helpless? Must he not therefore engage in the theory and practice of forensic rhetoric in order to meet such contingencies?"[xxii] Now why is it impossible, according to Socrates? Socrates compares his situation when he is accused to a physician who would be accused by a candy maker to a bunch

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[xix] Emphases added by Strauss.
[xx] Strauss is probably referring to Martin Schanz, *Sammlung ausgewählter Dialoge Platos: mit deutschem Kommentar*, 3 bd. (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1887-1893).
[xxi] Burnet 1964, 144-145.
[xxii] *Gorgias* 522c4-522c6.

of kids. [Laughter] And the candy maker: I am the man who gives you these candies, and you [the physician] give these bitter medicines and injections, and whatever. Now what would the kids say? [Laughter] Of course they would believe the candy maker and not the physician.[34] You may read it as a very powerful statement. But let us consider for one moment the implication. If this is a true description, a true simile, then the question arises: Can the Athenian jury understand Socrates's doings as Socrates meant them? And the answer I believe would have to be "no." And surely Socrates didn't wish to do anything undignified, improper; he would not beg the kids to let him off. But on the other hand he would like to say to them the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But they would be wholly unable to follow him, and therefore Socrates would be compelled to speak in a crude way. And therefore also, and for more thinking people, in a misleading way, to his judges. The frank statement of the truth would in the circumstances be nothing but useless provocation or, to use a term which Xenophon uses of Socrates's defense speech as he presents it, talking big, boasting. And this, of course, would also be an impropriety. Now let us see, there are two passages which we have to discuss. At the beginning of this section here, when he says, "In the first place"—I translate literally—"I am just in making a speech of defense." Now what does this mean, "I am just"? How does the translator put that?

Mr. Reinken: "It is right for me."

LS: "Right for me." But there is a certain ambiguity. I mean, does this mean "I have a right to make a speech of defense," or "I have a duty," [or] "I'm under an obligation to make a speech of defense"? How would you understand that? It is the Greek word [that] is ambiguous. But if there is a difference of emphasis, what would be the emphasis?

Student: Right?

LS: No, I think, as the end of this passage shows, which we read, one must obey the nomos, law, and make a speech of defense. In other words, it is Socrates's legal duty.

Now Anytus is the chief accuser, as we see here, but in the *Apology of Socrates* he remains in the background. The accuser whom Socrates cross-examines later is Meletus. In order to see and understand the relation of Socrates and Anytus as Plato saw it, one would have to study the dialogue *Meno*, where Anytus occurs years before the trial in a conversation with Socrates. I repeat, the first accusers did not say that Socrates is an atheist, as you see from b6 to c3. This was merely an inference of the part of the wholly ignorant listeners, because the men who spread this rumor were not wholly ignorant; they had heard in one way or the other from very suspicious sources that Socrates was worrying about the things aloft. This one part of the accusation, to make the weaker speech the stronger, was a claim made originally by a man called Protagoras, the most famous of all sophists. And that means, according to the ordinary understanding, to make the unjust speech superior, the unjust reasoning superior to the just reasoning. Now this is of course what unfortunately, or necessarily, every defense lawyer does, at least forensic rhetoric in so far as it serves guilty men. It tries to show that their cause is stronger and overcomes the law. When he speaks then around c8 to d4, when he says that it is not possible to mention their name, to know and to say their name except if some one of them happens to be a comic poet.[35] He goes on: "but those who, using envy and slander, have persuaded you, and others were sincerely persuaded," i.e., were not prompted by envy. So this

implies, it seems, that the comic poets in question did not make use of envy and slander, nor did they sincerely accuse Socrates. Well, what was then the motivation of the comic poets if it was not to slander Socrates out of envy, or because they were sincerely convinced of his guilt? Well, of course the comic poets want to make people laugh, and Socrates was in a sense a ridiculous figure. And he was a godsend, so to speak, to the comic poets. [Laughter]

The question is whether this is sufficient as an explanation. I will not go into that now because we have not sufficient evidence for that hitherto, but I would like to raise the question which we must raise on the basis of this passage here, since Socrates refers to it explicitly: Why were people envious of Socrates? He will say later on that he lives in extreme poverty. He was also very ugly. He had no exalted position, politically or otherwise. Why should people be envious of Socrates? I know only one passage where the question is answered in an indirect way, and that is in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, Book 3, chapter 1, section 39, in which Xenophon speaks not of the case of Socrates in particular, but of a sophist who had been killed by some king deep in Asia. And Cyrus, the conqueror of this country, asks the son of that king: Why did your father kill him? And then he said: Well, I admired that sophist more than my father, the king. And therefore he was envious of him, and since he was a powerful potentate he could easily kill him. So in other words, there was a kind of envy of some fathers which must have played a role, as we shall see later.

Now at the end of this passage here, Socrates asks as it were for a special favor, namely, that the jury admit the existence of the first kind of accusers, of which they of course didn't know anything, and then permit him to deal first with these first accusers. He emphasizes the fact, which you cannot see from the English translation but it is clear in the original in d8 and e1, *hosper ego lego*, he emphasizes the fact that *he* is the one who speaks of the first accusers. He, "as *I* say." Was he the first to speak of the first accusers? Was he the one who discovered their existence? A question which we[36] must not forget, although we are not yet in a position to answer it. The final statement in line 19a or so implies that the whole jury, the whole body of judges, is prejudiced against Socrates because they have been exposed from their youth and even from their childhood on to that never-contradicted slander that Socrates does these and these things, and which led them, the listeners, necessarily to the inference that Socrates did not believe in gods. The whole jury is prejudiced against Socrates and that, he says here, right at the beginning of his whole speech, as was the traditional rule of rhetoric that you should begin a speech, forensic or not, with a *captatio benevolentiae*, with an attempt to win the good will of the audience. Now when you begin by saying, not exactly like a present-day juvenile delinquent, "you all hate me"—but almost like it [LS laughs], it is, so to speak, its mature equivalent—that is not a very good attempt to win the good will. And Socrates admits of course by this very fact, and that's very important, that he knows that his case is well-nigh hopeless because of this prejudice.

In 19a, toward the end of the passage read [Socrates says]: "I wish that this would so happen that I could free you from that prejudice, if it is better, in any way, for you or for me." Socrates is not unqualifiedly eager to be acquitted. He says, "if it is good for you and for me." Perhaps his acquittal would not be good for him and/or the city. Only the god knows; and therefore that is

not the key point. Again I remind you of a brief scene from the *Gorgias*.[xxiii] We take it for granted that a pilot who brings us, say, from an island to the mainland of Greece is a great benefactor of ours because if the boat had sunk we would have perished and—terrible. But of course, we do not know whether our salvation is not the beginning of much greater misery than an early grave, a watery grave. So at the end Socrates defends himself not because he wishes to be acquitted—that he makes quite clear—but because to defend himself is his legal duty. I[37] summarize a key point here. Socrates defends himself, as he indicates, against the charge that he is an atheist before a jury that is convinced that he is an atheist. This is the grave situation, the almost hopeless situation, in which Socrates finds himself. Mr. Bruell?

Mr. Bruell: With respect to what you just said, if he defends himself only because it's his legal duty, why does he then refer to the first set of accusers?[38] He could have limited himself.

LS: All right. If it is[39] his legal duty to defend himself, that means of course that he cannot defend himself in a perfunctory manner. He must do it properly; otherwise he would not fulfill his legal duty, and therefore he must put the whole charge before them, and especially if the accusers are inept and have not been able to verbalize the charge properly, he must do that properly. Does that not make sense? Yes?

Mr. Bruell: This is on another point. In d2, who is influenced by the envy and the slander? Are the people he's speaking to—

LS: The first accusers; a part of the first accusers.

Mr. Bruell: A part of the first accusers. It's not just that they use envy and slander to convince others. Does he give that as the original motivation for the first—

LS: Not of all. Some people were convinced, sincerely believed that Socrates did these unsavory things; and that he was worrying about the things aloft—that means the heavenly bodies and their motions, and so on—and investigating the things beneath the earth, et cetera, some people believed that. How they came to believe it: no indication. We[40] will have to do some figuring out when we come to the refutation. Yes?

Mr. Bruell: That's what I was thinking.

LS: But there could be people who, somehow they were told that Socrates did these things. And then he said: What a terrible man, and they believed him. Others were envious of him before they heard that and used this rumor in order to slander Socrates.

Mr. Bruell: But that seems to indicate that the people who were envious had firsthand knowledge, whereas the people who were honestly convinced are convinced only by hearsay.[41]

[xxiii] *Gorgias* 511d6-512b6.

LS: That makes sense, ya. I believe he doesn't prove it exactly, at least as far as I can see. But it is a plausible distinction. And this envy, I think, plays a role. We'll come to that subject later on; I mention now only the passage from Xenophon, but it's also in Plato. Yes?

Student: If Socrates wishes his acquittal only if it's good for him and the city, then does that change the basis of the trial[42]? Socrates's idea of the trial then is not that it is going to decide anything just, or decide on matters of justice or truth; is it because Socrates, irrespective of whether his acquittal would be either just or[43] [true], he wants his acquittal only if it's good for the city?

LS: No, but he cannot know what is good. He cannot know that. I mean, in other words, he cannot know whether, by having been executed when he was seventy he was not spared a terrible cancer a few weeks later, or something the equivalent of that. He cannot know that. He means that.

Same student: But still he's willing to say, though, that if it were, if even though he cannot know it, if it were better for the city—

LS: Ya, but he doesn't make this clear; he only alludes to it. He says at the end of this passage: Nevertheless this may go as it is pleasing to the god. Meaning the god—presupposing that he is favorably disposed toward Socrates and Athens, which we do not know but which Socrates here assumes—he will do the best for Socrates and the city of Athens, or if there is some conflict, for one of the two. Is this clear?

Same student: Fairly clear. But then my problem with that statement is that then I wonder how Socrates envisions things being pleasing to god, because I thought—

LS: You know, that he cannot know. I mean, he will discuss this later, that he cannot know—that he could perhaps know after death where he lands, in a hot place or in a pleasant place, that he cannot know in this life. But[44] he presupposes that nothing will happen, nothing bad will happen, to any man who is or any city which is not hated by the gods[45], or at least to which the gods are not indifferent. Of course this is a great question: How much are the gods interested in the city of Athens and in Socrates? We cannot answer the question on the basis of this remark. That is exactly a part of a popular speech, that he cannot go into these questions to any extent. [46]From time to time we will have to turn to the other dialogues in order to clarify these kinds of questions. But does it not make sense in itself—I mean, that there are infinite problems concealed, there is no question. But simply to say: I cannot honestly wish to live longer because I do not know whether it is good for me—especially in the case of an old man, but also perhaps of young. [47]"I trust[48] in God," as we say, or "in the gods," as the Greeks say; that is to say that they are not vicious, not full of malice. And that is one [consideration]. Now but what then shall I do, since I cannot know what the gods have in mind, what they intend with me? I can only obey the *law*. Now the law—this is again an ambiguous word: it can mean the law of the polis; it can also mean something which[49] came to be called the natural law. That would be—in other words, there is something of the the will of the gods known to me, but not the whole, and especially not the future fate and what they intend with . . . . There are other passages; we'll come to that when he

speaks towards the end of the book [about] what he believes to be his fate after death. He takes this up.

Student: Isn't there a conflict of values considering on the one hand what he has already said earlier about the truth, and that it is the duty of the orator to speak justly, and in particular the duty of the jury to judge justly, that is to judge as to whether it's the truth. And here, where he is at least in effect giving up and saying that it is the jury who's going to decide, and he evidently seems to think that it should decide, in accordance with[50] whether it's good for the city and for himself. That is, what he's saying here is that the jury ought to decide. He doesn't want to be acquitted unless it is for the good.

LS: No. But what he says, let us repeat that: "I would wish that this might so happen," meaning in the context that "I might be acquitted." I mean, Socrates has the simple aversion to dying, especially to being executed, which most human beings have. He would [not] wish that. But being a thoughtful man, he makes a qualification because he doesn't know what his future might bring. He might become very miserable. He has three kids, and what kind of troubles might he live to see when he would live ten years longer, you know—read any daily paper to see the simple wisdom which is here presupposed. So he says, "I would wish to be acquitted if it were better for me to be." But he includes also the polis, the city, and says, "if it were better for you." This has a grave implication: maybe it is better for the city of Athens that Socrates is executed. What would that mean?

Student: The problem here I see is the dilemma for the jury, where on the one hand they're exhorted that their duty is to judge justly, where on the other hand Socrates is saying that their duty is also to judge in accordance with what would be good for the city.

LS: No. He is not speaking of their duty at all here, he is speaking of wishes. Their duty is to judge justly. But what one could wish is something different, you know, that is something different. But it is quite good that you drew our attention to the passage.

Student: When you say that Socrates aggravates the charges against him, when he says that the first accusers accuse him of believing in no gods, when the—

LS: Ya, but it is more subtle than that. They say—they don't explicitly say that—

Same student: But they say something which leads others to infer.

LS: Ya, which compels, almost, the listener to draw the inference. All right.
Student: And that this is aggravating the original charge, which had been only that he didn't believe in the gods of Athens. But in fact—

LS: Let us say the actual charge, because if we believe Socrates we must assume that there were persecutors.

Student: But if he can defend himself against the actual charge, then it would certainly be[51] easier to defend oneself against the charge that you believe in no gods than against the charge that you don't believe in certain specific gods.

LS: Ya, that is true, but the problem is this: if the jury is convinced that he is a downright atheist, I mean, if he has to fight this prejudice in the short time (well, say, an hour's time), a prejudice built up in generations, so to speak, what a hopeless task. This is I think the main point he wishes to make. And you see, if the first charge had been minor, less grave than the second charge, then the refutation of the second charge would be the only thing which counts. And this refutation is possible because he knows the author of the charge, this present accuser, Meletus, and he will cross-examine him. But he is confronted with a much broader charge, [a] much more hopeless charge, and he cannot possibly cross-examine the originators of that charge. Yes?

Student: But by pointing out to his judges the prejudices which have been built up over a long period of time and that will undoubtedly influence their decision, isn't he hoping to have these judges re-examine their own conscience, to re-examine their own values to see if these prejudices which have been built up for so long really do hold any truth? So rather than compounding the charges against him, hasn't he really reached a much more significant point by having the judges reexamine their own feelings and values?

LS: [52]Well, I think that very few people directly act against the clear dictate of the conscience. But there is unfortunately a sophistry of the conscience, and quite a few things look[53] [like] moral demands which are not moral demands strictly speaking. Take a situation—I mean, I want to put it as gently as I can. Take the situation as it was twenty years ago in the state of Mississippi regarding an accused negro. And let us assume that he was a man of legal training and very able. Do you believe he could have disposed of the prejudice against negroes within one speech, and especially if the evidence—hopeless. Now surely atheism and being a negro are two very different things, but they have this in common here: the prejudices built up by many men in a long[54] time. And by bringing this point up here, Socrates, you see—I mean, there is as it were a surface. The surface is that three men—mentioned by name later, Anytus and the others—have accused Socrates of this and this crime, which will be formulated later on. Socrates can't refute that, and he can't even ask the accuser to stand up and answer his cross-examination. And Socrates refutes him, as we will see, but now Socrates says: This is only the top of an iceberg, utterly uninteresting. The iceberg is the first charge, and this first charge is much bigger.[55] And at the same time it is impossible to cross-examine the accusers, so he can only say: I didn't worry about the things aloft; I didn't dig up the earth for onions, or whatever it might be, and so on. I never did any of these things. But that is exactly the case of the man I mentioned before who says: I didn't kill him; I admit he was killed with my gun, and I admit I have no alibi. Then what is the use of his full sincerity? [It] can't overcome the prejudice.

Student: Well, doesn't it relate more or less to what Socrates's view of man is? That he will never err willingly, that if he is shown the right way through knowledge that he will see what the truth is? So that he would assume that if he couldn't show these men their prejudices and then correct them—

LS: [56]That is, I would say, a kind of fairytale story about Socrates, which I know occurs in even some scholarly books or books supplied with scholarly apparatuses.[57] We can be certain Socrates was not a simple-minded, naïve man.[58] I mean, this simple thing which became so famous in the works of Hobbes—I mean, how did he say: If a truth—

Mr. Reinken: "So oft as reason is against a man, so oft will a man be against reason."[xxiv]

LS: You can be sure that while the formulation stems from Hobbes, the insight itself was thoroughly known to Socrates: that you cannot take away deep-seated prejudices in a few—I mean, you can silence people; that Socrates does easily because he is the supreme dialectician. He silences everyone [laughter] but that doesn't mean convince them.[59] For example, read the *Gorgias*. Callicles is a very good example. Callicles is silenced with some difficulty by Socrates, but he is never for one moment convinced. Or take Thrasymachus in the First Book of the *Republic*. Some of you will have read it. Socrates silences him, but is Thrasymachus convinced? That's another matter. There must be some common ground to begin with for conviction.[60] Well, of course then we can say there is some common ground among all human beings, and Socrates was of course the first to say that. But this common ground may not be sufficient to overcome their serious prejudices. For instance, the common ground is shown by the fact that there is no one here who for one moment would doubt that it is today, the twentieth of October, a Thursday, and [that] so-and-so many people are in this room—I mean, unless someone cannot count or is blind or so. But every normal human being we can say would of course admit that. But what is the use of this kind of agreement, where we can enumerate the millions of facts where we all agree—what is the use of that when you come up against prejudice? I would say, and I repeat this sentence: first of all[61] [Socrates] enlarges the charge by bringing in the first accusers, and then he makes clear while enlarging it that the defense against the first accusers is hopeless because of the deep-seated character of the prejudice. So it might be that after he has refuted the first accusers, it might be possible for Socrates to refute the present accusers, but still the iceberg proper remains untouched by whatever success he might have with the second accusers. So we have to stop here. unfortunately, but if you have questions I ask you to jot them down and bring them to our attention at the next class. And we will then turn to the events against the old accusers.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "to the support—."

[2] Deleted "you—also."

[3] Deleted "as."

[4] Deleted "so that he could really—."

[5] Deleted "Socrates."

[6] Deleted "in opposition, so in."

[7] Deleted "with, by."

[8] Deleted "Can."

[xxiv] Thomas Hobbes, Epistle Dedicatory, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* (1640).

[9] Deleted “Not out of—and.”

[10] Deleted “he doesn’t.”

[11] Deleted “Now.”

[12] Deleted “very most—.”

[13] Deleted “But.”

[14] Deleted “I have, we have.”

[15] Deleted “and.”

[16] Deleted “word of.”

[17] Deleted “That is what.”

[18] Deleted “well.”

[19] Deleted “right at, or near the beginning.”

[20] Deleted “someone has.”

[21] Deleted “when you.”

[22] Deleted “refers to his….”

[23] Deleted “rhetoric.”

[24] Deleted “with a view….”

[25] Deleted “So then the question is, but….”

[26] Deleted “and it.”

[27] Deleted “of the…he may use….”

[28] Deleted “the, the two, this—.”

[29] Deleted “of.”

[30] Deleted “the—.”

[31] Deleted “Well I think—I believe this is.”

[32] Deleted “by Xenophon.”

[33] Deleted “his apology of.”

[34] Deleted “That is….”

[35] Deleted “Now the other people….”

[36] Deleted “will not—.”

[37] Deleted “mention….”

[38] Deleted “Well, he may not though, but.”

[39] Deleted “his duty to defend himself—.”

[40] Deleted “would have—.”

[41] Deleted “Yes?”

[42] Deleted “or the basis on which Socrates….Well.”

[43] Deleted “truth.”

[44] Deleted “he is sure that, that….”

[45] Deleted “and the question is—.”

[46] Deleted “We will have to take—.”

[47] Deleted “But what—then I.”

[48] Deleted “in the—.”

[49] Deleted “was called—.”

[50] Deleted “you know—whether it’s good.”

[51] Deleted “…In other words it would.”

[52] Deleted “Yeah, well, I can only say, take a case… conscience and all this kind of thing.”

[53] Deleted “as.”

[54] Deleted “times.”

[55] Deleted “And this—bigger.”

[56] Deleted “Yeah, but that is not…I mean that is.”

[57] Deleted “But Socrates was…. That.”

[58] Deleted “And he knows….”

[59] Deleted “I mean read only….”

[60] Deleted “If there is no….”

[61] Deleted “he.”

Session 3: October 25, 1966

Leo Strauss: We discussed last time the first part of the *Apology*, which consists of two sections, as we have seen: the proemium proper; and the presentation of the theme, which means in this case of the plan. Now Socrates opens his defense by the simple opposition of his accusers as clever liars and himself as a straightforward, simple teller of the truth. But he asserts at once that his accusers are not clever liars inasmuch as they presented Socrates as a clever speaker or clever liar. The simple opposition with which he starts is questionable, and this applies not only to the accusers but to Socrates as well. Yet the fact that the accusers are not clever liars is not of great help, if of any help, to Socrates. And this comes out through the plan of Socrates's defense, which is divided into two parts, but not because the charge is bipartite; Socrates follows rather a bipartition of the accusers, which he establishes. The accusers can appeal to a very powerful—to an all-powerful prejudice against Socrates created by the first accusers. Hence Socrates's telling the truth is doomed to failure from the beginning. How can you take on an all-powerful prejudice by a single speech? By bringing in the first accusers Socrates aggravates his situation, especially for this reason: for the first accusers led the Athenians to believe that Socrates does not believe at all in any gods whereas the present charge is that Socrates doesn't believe in the gods of the city.

Yet here is the strange fact: the first accusers did not accuse Socrates of atheism, of unqualified atheism. This was an inference on the part of those who listened to the first accusers. These listeners, in contradistinction to the first accusers, were people who knew absolutely nothing of Socrates, of what Socrates was doing or saying. They just hear that there is a man called Socrates who does these and these things and then they jump to the conclusion [that] hence he is an atheist. Now this is when we are then compelled to make a fundamental distinction between the listeners and the first accusers, and to wonder whether the first accusers were not closer to the source than the mere listeners. At any rate, these first accusers knew that one may study the things aloft and beneath the earth, et cetera, and yet believe in gods; otherwise they would themselves have brought forth this inference. One can say the first accusers were more sophisticated, more educated than the listeners. I remind you here again of the distinction which Socrates makes between the many who heard him talk on the marketplace and the few who heard him elsewhere. But the first accusers, however superior to the listeners, are nameless, unknown, and they were many. They were more likely to belong to those who heard Socrates on the marketplace, because the many had heard him there. This would mean that the persecutors knew nothing of Socrates firsthand; they were as much groping in the dark, and more so perhaps even than the mere listeners. They surely are utterly untrustworthy because they have no firsthand knowledge and so one can easily dispose of them. But the trouble is that because they are many and unknown they cannot be cross-examined, and Socrates must leave it therefore at a mere denial their accusation; he cannot cross-examine [them]. Now this is a summary of what I believe are the most important points made last time, but there seem to be some other points and some young men hailing from Cornell have brought up some point. Did you find a spokesman, or several?

Student: Well, he point we were wondering about most was—we discussed just what this phrase about some either being affected by or making use of envy and slander, persuaded them; and we

came out very uncertain as to just what that meant, whether it was using or just being subject to envy and slander, and how many groups of accusers this sentence indicated.

LS: Yes, now in other words, he makes here a distinction first between two classes: first, people honestly convinced. That's the first distinction. And therefore they somehow seem to find this terrible, and so: a man who studies the things aloft and beneath the earth and so on, such a fellow is capable of anything. And yet there are or there were other people who were not honestly convinced but[1] they slandered Socrates. They use slander and envy; they slandered Socrates out of envy . . . the two things are simply coordinated. So there were people who for one reason or[2] [another] were hostile to Socrates, and a reason is indicated, namely, envy. Perhaps they envied a man who knows his way in the things aloft and beneath the earth, and therefore they slandered him, or another reason. Later on, as we will see, Socrates will give a reason which has nothing whatever to do with his being a student of nature [for] why people were hostile to him and for this reason accused him falsely, insincerely, of being a student of the things aloft. But we have not yet reached that point so we must postpone it. But there is a difficulty, without any question; and the difficulty is in a way solved in the next large section of the *Apology* where Socrates refutes the first accusers. Their charge is baseless. And then the question of course arises: But how come that you are so unpopular if you do not do anything out of the ordinary? And then Socrates tells them of what he did, the famous story of his being the gadfly examining all Athenians; and then the debunked Athenians, not wishing to admit that they had been debunked, invent out of nothing the charge that Socrates is a man who investigates the things aloft and therefore is also an atheist. But this is a later explanation. We have to stick first to what we have read.

But there was another point, if I remember what I learned privately from Mr. Bruell, which you figured out about the first part of the *Apology*.

Mr. Bruell: I think that was with reference[3] to the proemium proper, that there was a massive contradiction in the fact that Socrates said that his accusers will be refuted by his manner, which is that of a simple truth-teller; and then in the second part he says: Well, don't bother about the manner in which I speak. You may not like that, but pay attention to what is just—

LS: So what would be—state it, that's the skeleton of the contradiction—

Mr. Bruell: He says first: "Watch the way I speak—"

LS: And "do not pay attention to it."

Mr. Bruell: "Do pay attention to the way I speak." And in the second part he says explicitly: Please don't bother about the way I speak.

LS: Yes, all right. Of course the context is slightly different, but I have nothing against this abstract statement. Now does this link up with the other points we found out regarding the proemium?

Mr. Bruell: Well, it seems to me that this might be a possible explanation: that he first states[4] the case as one would wish it to be, that a person who tells the truth could, without any rhetoric, stand before a court and be justified, be acquitted. And in the second part he states the case as it actually is, that the truth is very complicated, that even just to try to to state the truth before such a court is a very questionable affair and might bring him into disrepute. And in the second part he indicates that—he grants to the Athenians that they have the duty or the right to judge the justice of what he says, but not the truth. He—

LS: Oh yes. Good. Now then let us proceed, if it is all right with you. And first, Socrates, following his plan, defends himself against the old accusers in 19a8 to 24b2. And this is again divided into two parts. First he refutes the old charge, 19a8 to 20c3. And the result is [that] the charge is wholly baseless. And then this leads to the question: But why then the slander of Socrates? What did Socrates do that made him the target of slander? 20c4 to 24b2.[5] The second part is much more extensive, as we will see. Now let us turn to the refutation of the old charge in 19a8, and this refutation of the old charge itself consists, again, of two parts. That is very strange, how much the principle of bipartition goes through this work, at least in the first half, and this is probably connected with the fact that the charge itself is bipartite. Now let us read this first section from 19a8 on. Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken: "Now, let us take up from the beginning the question, what the accusation is from which the false slander[i] against me has arisen, in which Meletus trusted when he brought this suit against me." (19a9-19b2)

LS: So here it is, perfectly: Meletus, the present accuser, bases himself on the previous accusation.[6]

Mr. Reinken:

> What did those who aroused the slander say to arouse it? I must, as it were, read their sworn statement as if they were plaintiffs: "Socrates is a criminal and a busybody, investigating the things beneath the earth and in the heavens and making the weaker argument stronger and teaching others these same things." Something of that sort it is. For you yourselves saw these things in Aristophanes's comedy, a Socrates being carried about there, proclaiming that he was treading on air and uttering a vast deal of other nonsense, about which I know nothing, either much or little. And I say this, not to cast dishonour upon such knowledge, if anyone is wise about such matters (may I never have to defend myself against Meletus in so great a charge as that!),—but I, men of Athens, have nothing to do with these things. And I offer as witnesses most of yourselves, and I ask you to inform one another and to tell, all those of you whoever heard me conversing—and there are many such among you—now tell, if anyone ever heard me talking much or little about such matters. And from this you will perceive that such are also the other things that the many[ii] say about me. (19b2-19d8)

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[i] In original: "prejudice" instead of "slander"

[ii] In original: "the multitude" instead of "the many"

LS: Yes. Now you see, atheism is here not part of the charge, which confirms what we have seen before: that atheism was only an inference on the part of the listeners. The content of the old charge is in the main the same as the presentation of Socrates in Aristophanes's *Clouds*,[7] as he makes quite clear. But in the *Clouds* Socrates is presented as saying many nonsensical things,[8] [like] that he is walking on the air. What does this mean? I mean, that shows it is just a funny and ridiculous assertion. But what the old charge ascribed to Socrates is not nonsense—that Socrates makes quite clear—but something quite respectable. And so he says: What is that respectable thing?

Now I mention one point in passing, which is here only implied. In the *Clouds*, Socrates is presented as saying all kinds of ridiculous things, surely, but he is also presented[9] as denying the existence of Zeus and the other gods. Socrates does not mention this in any way. As a commentator early in this century has said, Socrates does not mention it *prudenti consilio*, out of a prudent consideration.[iii] Now what is that respectable thing which Socrates does not do but which is not bad to do? Knowledge of the things aloft and of the things beneath the earth. This is something, all right; but the accusation was also that he was trying to make the weaker speech the stronger one. Is this also something fine and respectable? Socrates does not make any distinction here between knowledge of the things aloft on the one hand, and this kind of rhetoric on the other. Socrates clearly implies that he would not act unjustly or criminally by devoting himself to such knowledge or science (c6), namely, science of the things aloft, of the things beneath the earth, and perhaps making the weaker speech the stronger one. Perhaps, the accusers had said, Socrates acts unjustly and acts as a busybody, or lavishes useless pain in doing these things. Perhaps he would act as a busybody in doing that without acting as a criminal, for one could say man's business is on the earth, not in heaven, nor beneath the earth—unless he were to look beneath the earth for onions, coal, or oil. That would also be man's business, naturally, but this use of this kind of knowledge or science is not considered here at all.

Now the old accusers charge him with indulging an innocent pastime, one can say; perhaps not very fitting for self-respecting citizens, but by no means criminal. More precisely, the old accusers, according to the presentation here, did not accuse him at all. The true old accusers, we recall, are the listeners to the so-called old accusers,[iv] and these listeners were the bulk of the Athenians: they drew the inference from Socrates's funny or strange doings that he must be an atheist.

Now, so what is Socrates defense against this "charge," in quotes? He does not possess this kind of knowledge or science. And he proves this through witnesses. Who are the witnesses? Answer: the bulk of the Athenians, the bulk of the jury, or at least those many among them who ever heard him talk: the many who heard him talk were those who heard him[10] [in] the agora,[11] [in] the marketplace. We can say Socrates appeals from the prejudice of the many to the knowledge of the many. But[12] as is implied in everything else, that knowledge which they had did not have

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[iii] Strauss may refer to Gottfried Stallbaum's commentary on the *Apology* in his edition of *Platonis Opera Omnia*, vol. I, sec. 1 (Gotha and Erford: Hennings, 1858), 20, 27.

[iv] That is, those who listened to the old accusers.

the slightest effect on their prejudice hitherto, for such a long time. Is it likely to have any effect now? Socrates claims complete ignorance of *physiologia*, of knowledge or study of nature, but this is contradicted by a well-known statement of Socrates a short while later, following the internal time of the dialogue. On the day of his death, as described in the *Phaedo*, he speaks of his passionate concern in his youth with *physiologia*. Now of course this was no longer his concern, we can say, but we know that the first accusers were the old accusers, that is to say, men who know the young Socrates and perhaps only the young Socrates. And this young Socrates was very much concerned with the things aloft and the things beneath the earth, and the Socrates presented in the *Clouds* is also in this sense the young Socrates.

Now here is a note of Burnet on 19d5. Those who want to look it up can easily do it because the passages are indicated here. "The attitude of Socrates being such as is described here, and at greater length, in the *Phaedo*, we may be sure that he never talked about these matters in public." Surely I believe that, and I think Socrates alludes to this fact by making a distinction between the many who heard him talk[13] [in] the market place and those who heard him talk elsewhere, but the question is much more [this]. Socrates says now: Not only did I[14] [never] talk about these matters in public; he said: I know nothing of that—which is a very different proposition. [Burnet continues]: "It is practically only in such things as the myth of the *Phaedo* that Socrates is made to betray his knowledge of contemporary science."[v] Well, that is another matter, that Socrates is made to betray his knowledge of contemporary science and that simple denial of his knowledge of contemporary science, if we can use that term.

Now you have seen also some new thing here. It is part of the charge [made] by the old accusers that Socrates is teaching others these things, the things aloft and so on. Now this [charge] Socrates refutes by implication, for, since Socrates did not posses that science, how could he teach it? But this is not explicitly stated. It is also not made clear whether to make the weaker speech the stronger one is part of the science; and what could rhetoric possibly have to do with, say, astronomy? That seems a very far-fetched question. This much about the first part of his refutation of the whole charge. Now,[15] before we have a discussion I suggest that we read the second half,[16] which begins where we left off.

Mr. Reinken: "But in fact none of these things are true, and if you have heard from anyone that I undertake to teach people and that I make money by it, that is not true either. Although this—" (19d8-19e2).

LS: "Teach people" is not good. Let us say, for example, "educate human beings." It's more literal.

Mr. Reinken:

> that I undertake to educate humans and that I make money by it, that is not true either. Although this also seems to me to be a fine thing, if one might be able to educate humans, as Gorgias of Leontini and Prodicus of Ceos and Hippias of Elis are. For each of these men, gentlemen, is able to go into any one of the cities and

[v] Burnet 1964, 163.

> persuade the young men, who can associate for nothing with whomsoever they wish among their own fellow citizens, to give up the association with those men and to associate with them and pay them money and be grateful besides.
>
> And there is also another wise man here, a Parian, who I learned was in town; for I happened to meet a man who has spent more on sophists than all the rest, Callias, the son of Hipponicus; so I asked him—for he has two sons—"Callias," said I, "if your two sons had happened to be two colts or two calves, we should be able to get and hire for them an overseer who would make them excellent in the kind of excellence proper to them; and he would be a horse-trainer or a husbandman; but now, since they are two humans beings, whom have you in mind to get as overseer? Who has knowledge of that kind of excellence, that of a man and a citizen? For I think you have looked into the matter, because you have the sons. Is there anyone," said I, "or not?" "Certainly," said he. "Who," said I, "and where from, and what is his price for his teaching?" "Evenus," he said, "Socrates, from Paros, five minae." And I called Evenus blessed, if he really had this art and taught so reasonably. I myself— (19d9-20c2)[vi]

LS: "Reasonably" meaning at such a reasonable price.

Mr. Reinken: Yes, so cheaply. "I myself should be vain and put on airs, if I understood these things; but I do not understand them, men of Athens." (20c2-20c5)

LS: Yes, that is the remainder of the second. Now let us see. The bipartition of the old charge corresponds to the bipartition of the present charge, namely, the present charge. To mention this in advance if you don't know or remember it: atheism, corruption of the young. And here we have an equivalent to the corruption of the young, namely, that Socrates is educating human beings. "Educating human beings"—that's a rather low phrase, a low expression. It's indicated by the examples of, say, horses or cows—you know, there is also a species called men, this non-feathered biped. And just as you need a herdsman[17] here, you need a herdsman there and that is good. Now[18] educating human beings for money is also a subject in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, by the way. Here Socrates says "someone might have told the Athenians." He no longer says "many might have told them" that Socrates was trying to educate human beings for money. Educating human beings—I add, for money, with a question mark—too is a fine thing, Socrates says, like the knowledge or science mentioned before, knowledge of the things aloft, although it includes making the weaker speech the stronger one. Now this formula, making the weaker speech the stronger one, stems from Protagoras, who also is an expert in educating human beings, but he is not mentioned here, as you see, for the very good reason that Protagoras had been accused of impiety before Socrates, so why should one aggravate the situation unnecessarily? The three men mentioned here—in the center is Prodicus, the man whom Socrates respected most of these people and with whom he was most closely aligned. At any rate, these men were sophists and Socrates says here in so many words that to be a sophist is a fine thing. I mean, what Socrates

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[vi] In original: "teach people." Throughout, Reinken continues to substitute "educate humans" for "teach people" while reading this passage.

thought about sophistry is a very long question, but here in his most popular speech, in his only Platonic speech which he addresses to the people of Athens, he does not attack the sophists. On the contrary, [19] sophistry is something fine, i.e., sophistry as educating people for money.

Now one of the accusers and the wire-puller behind the accusation altogether, Anytus, occurs in the dialogue *Meno*, and speaks very angrily and viciously about the sophists. And as Socrates finds out very soon, he has never seen a sophist in his life. It's just a vicious prejudice and, compared with such people filled with vicious prejudice, Socrates has a certain reasonable sympathy for the people accused, who cannot defend themselves. But moreover, in the *Republic*, in the Sixth Book, when the question of sophistry comes up, Socrates says, "*the* sophist par excellence is the political multitude," and not these individuals who were so unpopular with many Athenians.[vii] So that should not be too surprising. Socrates, we see here, casts some doubt on the possibility of men's possessing that art, *technē*—not *epistēmē*, science—of educating human beings, but he did not cast any doubt on the possibility of man's possessing knowledge of the things aloft. He did not say anything on this point. And you must have observed the obviously comical character of the Callias/Evenus story. When? From where? And for how much? I am sure that has not escaped anyone here.

Now there is another point in Burnet's commentary on 19c4 which I would like to read to you, where[20] [Burnet] says "Socrates was acquainted with the science of his time, and . . . he was dissatisfied with it." Burnet, on the basis of his profound knowledge, says that. But here he says, "it[21] is to be observed [further] that Socrates could hardly be expected to explain his real grounds for dissatisfaction with the science of his time to a popular court."[viii] Ya, but the question is: did Socrates say anything[22] to the effect that he was dissatisfied here?

Student: Yes, he does, it seems to me. He says, "and I say this not to cast dishonor upon such knowledge *if* anyone is wise about such matters," which seems to imply that perhaps nobody is.

LS: So it's a condition.

Student: He says, "I don't want to cast doubt upon it if anyone at all is wisest about it," so the inference is that nobody is.

LS: [23]Now let us compare it with the parallel in the—when he speaks of the other science. In [24]20c1, when he speaks of Evenus, it occurred to me: Evenus is to be blessed, if he had truly—the difference is the conditional clause, which questions it much more: the "if" here is an ordinary conditional clause which does not have this strength of denial, but it is indeed a condition, you are quite right. But on the other hand, what follows immediately: I [25]may not be charged of such a charge by Meletus; and later on when he says: This too seemed to me a fine thing—which implies that the preceding point was also a fine thing.

[vii] *Republic* 492b4-492c2.
[viii] Burnet 1964, 162.

Student: But isn't it possible, though, that the explanation for how he could have studied *physiologia* in his youth and yet now say, "I know nothing about it," is that after studying it he decided there was nothing in it, that it was wrong.

LS: That could be, but there is no statement to this effect here.

Same student: Yeah, except the slight implication in his question—

LS: Slight implication. Less strong than the case of education of human beings. Now at any [rate] Socrates doesn't say here a word to the effect that he was dissatisfied with "quote the science of his time unquote." Such a thing like "the science of his time" did not exist in Socrates's language. He denies any knowledge of it. And now, here is another point in Burnet, 19c7. I cannot find it now. Ya, well, the word "science." "Socrates is not to be frightened into expressing a contempt for science which he does not feel." Here the simple question: What is science? For a man living in the twentieth and the nineteenth century it is clear, he knows what science is: modern science, more or less. But what does science mean? Socrates says "this kind of science," "this kind of knowledge." We[26] shall come back to this point later. Ya, and of course it is quite clear when he speaks of these sophists or alleged educators of human beings: Are these men able to educate human beings, or are they merely able to persuade the young to follow them? The latter is undoubtedly true because they are somehow exciting, strange birds, the sophists, and more exciting than their uncles, grandfathers, and so on. So they succeed, but whether they are able to educate remains an open question.

Now this is the refutation of the charge. It consists in simple denials, at best in the first case in an appeal to the many who do not know what Socrates did outside of the marketplace, to tell to each other, as it were, that Socrates did not do or know any of these things. So this is the refutation of the first accusers. Now this raises of course a very great difficulty, which I have mentioned before: How come [27]Socrates got such a bad name if he was innocent of this strange doing of the physiologists and/or the sophists? Now shall we go on now?

Mr. Reinken: "Now perhaps someone might rejoin: 'But Socrates, what is the matter with[ix] you? Whence have these—'" (20c5-20c6)[28]

LS: Ya,[29] "what is your business with them"—"the business," "your business."

Mr. Reinken:

> "Whence have these slanders[x] against you arisen? For certainly this great report and talk has not arisen while you were doing nothing more out of the way than the rest, unless you were doing something other than most people; so tell us what it is, that we may not act unadvisedly in your case." The man who says this seems to me to be right, and I will try to show you what it is that has brought about my reputation and aroused the slander against me. So listen. And perhaps I shall seem

[ix] In original: "trouble about you"

[x] Reinken continues to replace "prejudice" (in the Loeb translation) with "slander."

> to some of you to be joking; be assured, however, I shall speak perfect truth to you.
>
> The fact is, men of Athens, that I have acquired this reputation on account of nothing else than a sort of wisdom. What kind of wisdom is this? Just that which is perhaps human wisdom. For perhaps I really am wise in this wisdom; and these men, perhaps, of whom I was just speaking, might be wise in some wisdom greater than human, or I don't know what to say; for I do not understand it and whoever says I do, is lying and speaking to arouse slander against me. (20c6-20e4)

LS: Yes, now, let us stop here. What is Socrates's peculiarity which made him hated? What is that business peculiar to him? Now Socrates says the first answer is connected with his wisdom, which is human wisdom qualified: it seems to be human wisdom—human, not superhuman, like that of Gorgias, Prodicus, and Hippias. And this seems to imply because it is superhuman it is impossible for man, and therefore the alleged wisdom of these sophists is a sham. But it is not so clear whether *physiologia*, or the study of nature, would be superhuman.

Now there is here in c6 to 8[30] a seeming repetitiousness, but Socrates makes here a distinction. He does something more out of the common, or more superfluous than others, and that he does something different from what the many do. Now the latter is of course much less questionable and undesirable than the first. The emphasis is altogether on what Socrates is doing. The logos, the speech, the name, which he got is about Socrates's doings, his business, his *pragma*. Now here is another point in Burnet, on 22d8. Human wisdom, in d8, Burnet says: "this is, of course, the keynote of the Socratic teaching." "Of course" is never quite of course. "It must, however, be remembered that he does not mean merely, as it is sometimes supposed, 'worldly wisdom'. It includes Logic, and the theory of knowledge and it includes Ethics [unquote—LS]."[xi] Now what do we say to this learned note? And[31] we will observe here a fundamental defect of interpretation which shows in another way[32] Burnet's naiveté. Well, this distinction of philosophy into disciplines, like logic, and ethics, and so on, is post-Platonic. So it is very grave to apply it to Plato, and also to Socrates. "Theory of knowledge" is perhaps stemming from Hegel, but surely not Platonic or Aristotelian. Now[33] this remark of Burnet's, this as well as others suffers from another defect. He speaks quite frequently of Socrates's irony, and therefore[34] that has to be considered also in detail: Where does the irony begin and where does it stop? One cannot fall back on irony in cases where it hits you over the head, like when he[35] describes the situation between Callias and Evenus. This is not a vehicle which stops when you give it a sign, like a taxi. One has to put this on a much broader basis. This much on this section.

So Socrates regards this request as perfectly just, that he should explain how did he get this bad reputation if he lived and acted like every other normal Athenian citizen. And the explanation he will give in the immediate sequel, and let us first read the immediate sequel.

[xi] Burnet 1964, 168.

Mr. Reinken: "And, men of Athens, do not interrupt me with noise, even if I seem to you to be boasting; for the word which I speak is not mine, but the speaker to whom I shall refer it is a person of weight." (20e4-20e8)

LS: [36]"Is someone trustworthy to you," let us say.

Mr. Reinken:

> For of my wisdom—if it wisdom at all—and of its nature, I will offer you the god of Delphi as I witness. You know Chaerephon, I fancy. He was my comrade from a youth and a comrade of your democratic party, and shared in the recent exile and came back with you. And you know the kind of man Chaerephon was, how impetuous in whatever he undertook. Well, once he went to Delphi and made so bold as to ask the oracle this question; and, gentlemen, don't make a disturbance at what I say; for he asked if there were anyone wiser than I. Now the Pythia replied that there was no one wiser. And about these things his brother here will bear you witness, since Chaerephon is dead. (20e8-21a11)

LS: Yes. So Socrates proves that he possesses human wisdom by a witness whom the Athenians regard as trustworthy. Who is that witness? The god in Delphi. That is what he says. But how do they know what the god in Delphi said? Well, Chaerephon is dead. Chaerephon's brother. Well, this is a point which I mention only in passing. Those of you who have the time should read Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Book 2, chapter 3, where the relation between Chaerephon and one of his brothers, perhaps his only brother, is mentioned. They were not on the best of terms; but it may not be the same brother.[37] So Chaerephon is of some importance here, without any question, because he is the link. And[38] Socrates surely emphasizes the trustworthiness of Chaerephon himself. He was a comrade of Socrates. Comrade [*hetairos*] is not as close or is not quite so good, so to speak, as a friend (*philos* in Greek), but still, you know, a man with whom you are in rather regular contact. And he is trustworthy to the Athenians, i.e., to the demos, because he was a rather zealous democrat, at least to this description. Well, "the democratic party" is too free [a] translation. He says "the multitude," but it has indeed this meaning. For even if Apollo were a trustworthy witness, his testimony would have been mediated by Chaerephon. The god in Delphi said that Socrates possesses the highest wisdom that a man can possess, and this implies that Socrates is wiser than the sophists, whose wisdom, if it exists, is superhuman and therefore impossible—and even [wiser] than the physiologists.

Now here this story about Chaerephon in Delphi is the second story told by Socrates in the *Apology*. The first one was that about Callias and Evenus, which we have read shortly before. Both stories are new to the audience, otherwise they would not have to be told, in contrast, for example, with 31c7 following, when Socrates speaks of his demonic thing, and there he says: "Well, you have heard me talk about it frequently." So we can assume the audience or a considerable part of the audience knows the story of Socrates's *daimonion*. But these two stories are new, at least to the large majority. But this leads to a further question. Is the story of the first accusers not *also* new to the audience? Socrates had to tell them; it was something which they apparently had never heard before. And what is the evidence for that story? Aristophanes's *Clouds*, the comedy. But was that an accusation? These are dark things.

Now the purport of the story of the oracle in the context of the *Apology* as a whole is this: Socrates proves his piety, which as we know is not in need of proof. He proves that in passing [39]in the sequel, and he proves it abundantly. His whole life is devoted to the service of Apollo, of the god, as he will make clear later. But of course his piety is in need of proof for the simple reason that the jury has a prejudice that he is not pious. One thing which one can easily overlook: Chaerephon asks the god in Delphi. He went to Delphi. Why did he go there? The[40] wording of the question: Is there anyone wiser than Socrates? shows that Socrates had impressed Chaerephon as wise before Chaerephon went to Delphi. We can therefore say, we are forced to say, there was a pre-Delphic Socratic wisdom. And what Socrates will say about his wisdom in the sequel is a post-Delphic Socratic wisdom, and the only question is where to draw the line, say, in terms of years. Was this pre-Delphic Socratic wisdom perhaps not something like Socrates's youthful physiology? Did Chaerephon seek Delphic authorization of that pre-Delphic wisdom or protection for it? These are questions which we must raise and for which we do not get an answer. Socrates states that Chaerephon's action was daring, was bold. Why was it a bold question: Is anyone wiser than Socrates? But of course, measured by Socrates's modesty—in Greek, *sōphrosynē*, a term which doesn't seem to occur in the *Apology*, by the way. But also there is another reason why it is daring, corresponding to the ambiguity regarding the trustworthy witness, namely: Is it Apollo or is it Chaerephon's brother? He asked: Is *anyone* wiser than Socrates? "Anyone" is so wide that it leaves[41] the difference between man or god. We do not know. Now this much about this. We must read the immediate sequel and then we'll have a brief discussion. But first we must see Socrates's reaction to the oracle. He has now heard from Apollo himself, mediated by Chaerephon, that no one is wiser than Socrates. Now what is his reaction to that extraordinary story? Let us read the immediate sequel.

Mr. Reinken:

> But see why I say these things; for I am going to tell you whence the slander[xii] against me had arisen. For when I heard this, I thought to myself: "What in the world does the god mean, and what riddle is he propounding? For I am conscious that I am not wise either much or little. What then does he mean by declaring that I am the wisest? He certainly cannot be lying for that is not possible for him." (21b1-21b9)

LS: No, that is not there; "it is not right [*themis*] for him," "not meet for him."

Mr. Reinken: "And for a long time I was at a loss as to what he meant; and then with great reluctance I proceeded to investigate him somewhat as follows." (21b9-21b10)

LS: Ya, then let us stop here. Now the oracle, which Socrates interprets to mean that he is the wisest, whereas the god had only said [that] no one is wiser than he. The oracle was unintelligible to him, for he was not aware of his possessing any wisdom,[42] so then he could simply reject the oracle as foolish. But this he cannot [do], because the god does not say the untruth: he does not lie, and he doesn't lie because it is not proper or meet for him. As a consequence the oracle is a riddle: on the face of it, it is impossible, and yet it must be possible.

[xii] In original: "prejudice."

Socrates must solve the riddle by examining in one way or the other the god or his saying. Now again let us turn to a remark of Burnet, on 21b8. Socrates "would naturally shrink from the attempt to prove the god a liar, but that is just what he tried to do. He does not seem to fear that the Athenians will regard this as impious. The fact is that the ordinary Athenian had no great respect for the Pythian Apollo," the Apollo of Delphi, because "the Oracle had taken the Persian side and the Spartan side, and generally opposed the Athenians."[xiii] [Laughter] I think I'm much too convinced of Socrates's piety to go into this kind of what the average political Athenian thought of the Pythian Apollo; I take this as literally as I possibly can. Socrates knows that he is not wise; the oracle asserts the opposite. And the first reaction is that the oracle is not above reason but against reason because it flatly contradicts what Socrates knows, and therefore the oracle is to be rejected. Yet Socrates is certain that it is not meet for the god to lie. And therefore, the radical change. Now what about this question: Does the god lie or not? What does Socrates say about it in other contexts? Does anyone of you remember the Socratic discussion of the veracity of the gods? Yes?

Mr. Brokaw: Not necessarily the veracity, but whether they know what they're talking about. When he's talking to Polus, he says they must have some divine inspiration; they don't know what they're talking about, just like oracles and prophets.

LS: Ya, but the oracles—of course this could conceivably mean the Pythia as distinguished from the god. No, that is not the point. Yes?

Student: In the *Republic* he says the gods have traditionally been understood as liars, but in the best city they will be understood as truth-tellers.[xiv]

LS: Yes, that's the passage which he meant, in the Second Book of the *Republic*. There are two dogmas of what is called there the theology, and the second dogma is the veracity of the gods. The passages are 380d-382e. One would have to read the whole passage. The gods do not lie, that is said here; but it is made clear, very clear, why they do not have to lie.[43] For human beings it is sometimes meet to lie,[44] for example, parents to children. The simple story of the stork, which was formerly given as the older form of sexual enlightenment, I believe it is called now, and which is such a lie that is proper. And there are also lies of a somewhat more interesting kind, lies used by generals toward demoralized soldiers or soldiers in danger of becoming demoralized, of rulers toward their unwise subjects, and so on. In brief, and I ask you to check what I assert now, the grave premise of this discussion in the *Republic* is that the gods do not rule human beings, and in particular human beings of questionable morality; that is the implication of the assertion of divine veracity.

The discussion of this subject is by no means limited to Plato's *Republic*. It is taken up again in modern times especially even by Descartes in his *Meditations*, where the veracity of God is a key dogma, so to speak, for overcoming the fundamental skepticism—and in the objections made by Père Mersenne. (Will you write his name on the blackboard? If you make a mistake, we'll

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[xiii] Burnet 1964, 172.
[xiv] *Republic* 382a1-383c6.

correct it.) This Mersenne, a theologian, questioned the correctness that the privilege of Descartes' assertion that God—not Apollo but the biblical God—does not say the untruth. For example, that one example which he gives: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days, in the book of Jonah, and it is not destroyed in forty days[xv]. . . . So God has said the untruth, but of course as a threat. But still, if you take the assertion literally, it is an assertion literally untrue. And[45] Descartes gives no answer to that.[46] If you have the time you might read it. Even granted without qualification that it is not meet for a god to lie, this implies of course that it is meet for a man to lie in certain circumstances. This is not questioned by Socrates here or elsewhere.

The interesting question is this: Are the present circumstances of Socrates of this character: that it might be meet to say the untruth, a partial untruth to the people? I reminded you before, last time, of Socrates's description in the *Gorgias* of the situation in which he would find himself if accused, the situation[47] of the physician accused by the candy maker that he inflicts pain on the children, and the children of course condemn him and take the side of the candy maker. Now if it is meet to lie, for Socrates, in such circumstances, it is of course also meet for him to assert that he does not lie, that he says the truth and nothing but the truth and this is what he does all the time. Is this not clear? If it is right to lie under certain conditions, it is also right to assert that one does not lie *while* one lies. It is an unpleasant point to make, but I think a necessary point.[48] Now what he does next is that Socrates describes his examination of the oracle, and this examination proves to be a vindication of the oracle. And even more than that, it proves that his whole life was a constant service to Apollo, to the god, namely, by proving that how wise he was by saying[49] that no one was wiser than Socrates. We will take this up when we go, but let us stop here for a moment at this point and see whether there are not any questions. Yes?

Student: Yes, when Socrates is telling the Athenians that Chaerephon was the comrade of his youth and their comrade—let's see, "the comrade of your democratic party," he says—

LS: All right. "Of the multitude"—these things can be dated. "Your flight" or "your exile," that was in 403 or thereabouts, ya, after the Peloponnesian [War], when the oligarchic party had won and the return after the defeat—404, 403—at this time, so that was about four years, four or five years before the speech is supposed to have been delivered. Yes?

Same student: Well, I missed a little bit of what you said there, but—

LS: No, because you referred to the youth of Socrates. But Chaerephon was surely comrade of the Athenian demos while Socrates was an old man already. Yes?

Same tudent: Was—is that "your democratic party" that he's mentioning here—

[xv] Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) circulated Descartes' *Meditations* to several philosophers and theologians, including Hobbes, Gassendi, and Caterus and Mersenne huimself. Descartes replied to each critic in an appended text, "The Objections and Replies." Second Objections and Replies, 143-4-144.

LS: Ya, but, he—he doesn't say here "democratic party"; he says "you, the multitude." But that means in fact the demos, and in this sense if you can use such a word as party in a classic Greek context you can say even "your democratic party."

Same student: I see. What I was trying to understand is whether Socrates was here setting himself apart as a non-democrat.

LS: That he makes quite clear, I think so. We found an earlier passage to this effect, but the mere fact that he makes a distinction between being a comrade of Socrates and a comrade of the demos is at least indicated—but I believe last time already we have seen a passage (although I do not remember it at the moment) which intimated this cleavage between Socrates and the demos. No, this could hardly be—no it will come up in the sequel I think. It will come out in the sequel. Socrates does not pretend anywhere that he was a card-carrying member of the democratic party of Athens [laughter].

Student: But it is a curious thing that he would bring this up while he was accused. For all the judges were—

LS: Yes, because this was the most obvious point that has misled quite a few modern interpreters a generation ago. They couldn't believe that impiety could possibly be the ground of the charge against Socrates, partly because Socrates is notoriously pious and partly because Athens is notoriously liberal, tolerant. But that was so. And so they had to find a reason, and they said: Well, of course Socrates was not a democrat. And in Xenophon's presentation in the second chapter of the *Memorabilia*, when he gives the first quotation from the accuser's speech, whoever that accuser may have been, the first quotation refers to Socrates's criticism of democracy, namely, that it is an absurd regime because people are elected to or picked for office on the basis of the lot,[xvi] you know, and meaning in a wholly random manner. Which is not quite literally true; you know there were some offices to which people were elected by raising their hands, but quite a few to which people were elected just by lot, and that is of course the most democratic form: a perfect equality among the citizens. Now[50] no one has ever said that Socrates was a democrat, that is clear. But whether this was the reason why he became unpopular and ultimately why he was accused, condemned, and executed, that is a long question. There is some evidence for this view in the very text of the *Apology*, as we will see soon. There is no doubt. Was this the point you wanted to make?

Student: Yes.

LS: Ya, and by the way, let us never forget one thing. We[51] see in classical antiquity quite a few people who were anti-democratic. The most extreme anti-democratic statement ever written in classical antiquity, and perhaps also in modern times, occurs in a Platonic writing: in the *Republic*, where Socrates is presented as setting forth his anti-democratic view. So one could understand that people who were democrats in the ancient sense of the term hated Socrates on that score, that would be intelligible. But it is not, as Plato's diagnosis is—that was not the core

[xvi] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I.2.9-10.

of the matter; the core, as we shall see, was the impiety charge. Whether there is a connection between the impiety charge and the non-democrat charge, that is a long question. We are not yet prepared to discuss it. Now you raised your hand, yes?

Mr. Fielding: Mr. Strauss, I believe you said that the first accusers are utterly untrustworthy and I wonder what you mean by that, if Socrates did study nature as you—

LS: [52]Socrates says if one wants to take up the issue with them, that is a kind of fighting with shadow[s], shadowboxing. That is true on more than one level. Who are they? What is the source of their knowledge? They are unknown; there are so many and yet they are unknown. So you can't ask them, can't cross-examine them, and therefore can't ask you: How can you say such a thing of me, that I am studying the things beneath the earth? Because you don't know whom to ask.

Mr. Fielding: But that still doesn't mean that the charge literally is not true.

LS: It does not?

Mr. Fielding: It does not mean that Socrates did not at one time study—

LS: That is exactly the point. That is the point. So the question that we will see later: the only attempt at refutation which carries some weight of direct refutation is the discussion of the present accuser known by name, Meletus, whom Socrates cross-examines. And then he proves to Meletus beautifully that Meletus contradicts himself by saying that Socrates doesn't—he says in the discussion, not in the text of the charge—[that] Socrates doesn't believe in gods, and then he says Socrates introduces new divinities. Now if he introduces new divinities, then of course he is not an atheist, that's simple. But before we can handle that properly we have to know first: Did Socrates quote the charge literally, or did he manipulate it? [We cannot take up] this question [53]until we have reached that point. Maybe Meletus was not such an extreme fool as he appears from the *Apology*.

Student: If the first accusers are unknown, how does Socrates have knowledge of the first charges, the original charges against him?

LS: Well, one thing we know is Aristophanes's *Clouds*, but Socrates presents it that Aristophanes's *Clouds* was only one quite obvious sign of the existence of first accusers, if you please, a kind of parody perhaps, of it; but that is of course no proof that there were such first accusers. Socrates does not give any proof of the existence of first accusers; he merely tells the Athenians this point, which the Athenians have to be told because they do not know it, that there were first accusers.

Student: Where does he have knowledge of the accusations outside of the *Clouds* in direct sources?

LS: Who knows? So in other words,[54] you can say that is a piece of rhetoric. I mean, if someone says there were such first accusers apart from Aristophanes or other comic poets, then[55] the burden of proof would rest on him. It seems that Socrates's unpopularity came out rather late, I mean, not with certain individuals whom he may have heard—doubtless this has happened—but that it became a politically relevant thing, that seems to be rather late, just shortly before he was accused by the present accusers. Yes?

Student: Do we have another source besides the *Apology* for the Delphic Oracle story that is not Platonic?

LS: Xenophon's formulation, which comes much closer to the original, as someone knowing Plato and Xenophon would expect. Xenophon doesn't take such liberties as Plato does. And above all the text is preserved in Diogenes Laërtius, who had apparently copied it from something like the Athenian archives.[56][xvii] But this is a very wonderful piece of good luck we have, but we could prove[57] that the Socratic formulation here is not literal by the fact that Socrates says "about," "the charge is roughly like this," or something of this kind. But there is no question that this is not literal.

Student: But the Delphic story, the story of the—

LS: No evidence. No evidence.

Student: This is the only—

LS: [58]But there is[59] what I call a pre-Delphic Socrates and a post-Delphic Socrates, or one can also say the young Socrates as distinguished from the mature and old Socrates is a distinction which I believe today would be generally accepted. There is a parallel to that in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, chapter 11. And there[60] Socrates meets the prototype of the Athenian gentleman, a man called Ischomachus, who is a landowner, a gentleman farmer, but of some special kind, a very funny kind. And Socrates contrasts his way of life with that of Ischomachus. Socrates of course [is] not the gentleman farmer, although he knows everything one has to know about farming simply by having observed farmers by passing by when they were sowing or harvesting. Socrates knows everything. That was a simple art, the art of farming, and he contrasts that. And Socrates speaks here of himself as a man who is said to walk on the air and do the other things which were said by the comic poets. Now this conversation is made with Ischomachos because Socrates wants to find out what is the perfect gentleman, which is the same question as: What is virtue? Socrates has never given any thought to what is a perfect gentleman before, but he had already acquired [a] reputation or notoriety for being a natural philosopher. So that is Xenophon's way of stating that some conversion had taken place in Socrates's life. This I think we can regard as certain, historically certain, and this is somehow also here at length presupposed. Yes?

[xvii] Diogenes Laërtius, "Socrates," in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, XVIII.

Student: Immediately after Socrates appeals from the prejudice of the many to the knowledge of the many, he says that "from this you may know that the other things which the many say about me" are similar. (19d6-19d8)

LS: Where is that?

Student: 19d,[61] about four or five. Just before the end of the first paragraph in the refutation.

LS: [62]I suppose one can say this refers to making the[63] weaker speech stronger, yes, and perhaps also that he teaches physiology and not merely studies it.

Student: But it couldn't refer to the use of the many as witnesses, because in the previous sentence the many just said something.

LS: Ya, there is a subtle difference, a distinction which comes out only in the original, when he says "the other things which the many say about me," and then formerly, for example, in d3 he had said "many of you," which is not quite the same as "the many"—which needs some discussion of their relation: "the many," meaning the Athenian multitude; "many of you" means many, say, of the city, a large part of the citizen body, not necessarily the majority.

Student: That's not simply true, because a few lines previously he had said that "I will supply the many of you as witnesses," and he uses that strictly parallel with "many."

LS: Ya, sure. In d1, yes, that is true,[64] but "the many of you" is not quite the same as "the many," because "the many" might also include for example metics, [and] women for all I know, you know? And the "many of you," that would be many of the full citizens who are members of the jury. There is a certain ambiguity regarding the many, quite naturally, because that is connected with the fundamental distinction made earlier between many, who have heard him talk by the marketplace and, this is my interpretation, few who have heard him elsewhere. And where to draw the line? This is another indication of the riddle here, this usage to which you refer. Yes?

Student: You mentioned that in Chaerephon's question, he did not differentiate between the gods and man when he says: Is anyone wiser than Socrates? In 20d, as Socrates is leading up to the narration, he makes a reference to "the only wisdom that man can have."

LS: Now, which is that?

Student: In 20d. But he was going—

LS: Yes, yes, that is correct. Yes.

Same student: But I wanted—what kind of wisdom, the only wisdom that man can have?

LS: Ya, sure, the other would be a superhuman wisdom which the sophists have. Yes?

Same student: Well, later, when he tells about finding out what kind of wisdom he has, [he says that] it was[65] Socrates's wisdom that he didn't know about such things. Presumably the god's wisdom would be unlimited.

LS: You can adduce plenty of evidence from other Platonic dialogues to this effect; that is easy. But the question is: What does it mean in this context? And what does it mean especially in the mouth of Chaerephon?

Student: I was wondering, is Socrates deliberately separating himself from Chaerephon by having Chaerephon not differentiate between—

LS: No, but it could also be some joke at the expense of the Delphic prophetess, that she answered such an ill-defined question so simply to the detriment of her own high patron. That could also be; that is, that Socrates's belief in the gods is not the same as believing in the gods in which the average Athenian believed. You know? So he could very well have the notion that these gods, say, as presented by Homer and as underlying the common Athenian cultic practice, are indeed[66] not very respectable beings and, as a matter of fact, not beings at all. That would be perfectly compatible with his believing in gods in a different way.

Now shall we—we have time to read the first stage of Socrates's examination of the oracle, unless there are some questions. If not, Mr. Reinken will do this. 21b9.

Mr. Reinken: "I went to one of those who had a reputation for wisdom, thinking that there, if anywhere, I should prove the utterance wrong and should show the oracle—" (21b11-21c2)

LS: [67]Well, "the utterance" meaning the oracle, to make it quite clear. "[68]That here if anywhere I could refute the oracle." That's very important.

Mr. Reinken:

> and would[xviii] show the oracle "This man is wiser than I, but you said that I was wisest." So examining this man—for I need not call him by name, but it was one of the public men with regard to whom I had this experience, men of Athens—and conversing with him, this man seemed to me to seem to be wise to many other people and especially to himself, but not to be so; and then I tried to show him that he thought he was wise, but was not. As a result, I became hateful to him and to many of those present; and so, as I went away, I thought to myself, "I am wiser than this man; for neither of us really knows anything fine and good, but this man thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas I, as I do not know anything, do not think I do either. I seem, then, in just this little thing to be wiser than this man at any rate, that what I do not know I do not think I know either." From him I went to another of those who were reputed to be wiser than he, and these same things seemed to me to be true; and there I became hateful both to him and to many others. (21c2-21e3).

[xviii] In original: "should"

LS: Yes. Now this was the first stage. And he translates the Greek word *politikoi* by "public men." So let us rather say "the political men" to make it quite clear[69] [that he is] using the word politicians in its neutral sense, because a politician does not have to be a wicked man, of course. Now Socrates clearly sets out to refute the oracle, which means to act on the belief that the god does lie or is not wise, meaning [that he] says the untruth because he doesn't know better. He examines first the political men, who believe [they knew][70] something but in fact did not, and hence proved to be less wise than Socrates. So in this way Socrates makes a nuisance of himself. These others of whom he speaks toward the end of the passage, whom Socrates examined in addition to the first men mentioned, are presumably also political men, but [71]not necessarily. They might be a kind of men akin to the public men. Now in d3 to 4: "no man knows anything fine and good," "noble and good." Now this is of course a very grave assertion, no man knows anything noble and good. This is qualified by "it seems to be," *dokein men*, but if taken without the qualification it leads to the unqualified dependence on oracles and the like for knowledge of noble and good things. If we know nothing of that by ourselves, what shall we do? Yet will this dependence on oracles and so on be of any help? That would be the question.

At the beginning, when he comes to speak of this political man whose name he knows but does not wish to mention because, after all, it is unmannerly, unmannerly to do so, he says "conversing with him," *dialegomenos*. And he makes here a distinction[72], *diaskopon*, considering him, looking at him, looking through him before he converses with him. In other words, Socrates knew before that he was an empty-headed pompous ass. [Laughter] But he has seen [73]through him [before], but why does he then converse with him in addition to that? I believe we can see a reason. He did it in order to show those present that the fellow was despicable. They would not necessarily have Socrates's faculty quickly to see through a man.

Now it is important to observe the differences between Socrates's examination of the political man, political men, and those of the others. We shall make some observation regarding them when we come to these passages. One point I would like to mention only now: that he speaks of conversing in the strict sense, *dialegesthai*, from which the word dialectics is derived, only when he speaks of the political man and not of the other ones. Somehow from a certain point of view this will become clear, I think: the political men and Socrates's debunking of them is the thing which did him much more harm than his examination of the poets and of the handicraftsmen of whom he will speak in the sequel. And this would of course confirm the view, which is up to a certain point quite correct, that these politicians were presumably democratic politicians; and therefore by debunking them, the democratic populace came to detest Socrates—and some aggravating circumstances which we shall see later. Yes, someone raised his—yes?

Student: I was a little puzzled by what you you said, [that] Socrates doesn't really believe that[74] no man knows anything fine and good. Doesn't he really say that, given the present condition that we perceive things through our senses, we can only get an idea of what is absolutely good and beautiful and true, but if we didn't have this idea of what is absolutely good or beautiful or true, how would we ever know to look for it?

LS: Yes. Now what is the precise version, in d3—

Same student: He says "for neither of us really knows—" (21d4)

LS: Ya, the word which he uses here for knowing, *eidenai*, is a looser word, not *epistasthai*, and[75] [it means] "we do not have any knowledge," in the widest sense of knowledge, of anything noble and good. This is of course impossible, as you say, surely. But Socrates exaggerates his ignorance, clearly. But naturally, why does he do it? That is exactly his irony in the strict sense, I mean, not in the sense in which we ordinarily use the word irony, namely, irony means—I believe I said this before, but I'll repeat it: irony means to understate one's own worth,[76] to present oneself as less virtuous than one is. And therefore in particular it means to present oneself as less wise than one is, and one will do this on the superficial but practically important level in order not to hurt people's feelings. People wouldn't like it if Socrates would appear to be wiser than they. And whatever he can do by his examining people and being the humble, ignorant Socrates who shows up these sages as still unwiser than he is, he comes to be regarded as wise by those present, i.e., the adherents of these empty-headed fellows, and then he becomes hated on this score, so that Socrates can't escape hatred except if he would bury himself in some corner and only see his milkman, so to say, delivering the milk. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: What maybe ultimately lead to the matching of impiety/democracy charge. You've just shown in this section that Socrates treats gods and men alike. He says, "I was being pious, I was considering well what Apollo wanted," but really, as you just said, he tried to show Apollo up. He said, "I don't name the politician," which is making an obvious show of his respect for the man's good name, but in fact he was at pains to make the man a fool before his friends. So on the surface, in this section—

LS: I do not quite see the parallel.

Mr. Reinken: On the surface, he says, "I am pious and respectful to gods and to political men," the example being: I don't name names, but in each case he tries to show them up.

LS: Ya, but with this difference, because in the case of Apollo he vindicates Apollo, whereas in the case of the politicians he debunks them. [Laughter] No, I mean if there is a parallel it is more complicated than that. [LS laughs] If you have any further questions, as I hope you have, make note of them and we will discuss—

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "they use."

[2] Deleted "other."

[3] Deleted "to the first…."

[4] Deleted "what."

[5] Deleted "That's…."

[6] Deleted "Yes."

[7] Deleted “but in the—.”

[8] Deleted “and therefore could—that cannot be….”

[9] Deleted “as saying.”

[10] Deleted “on.”

[11] Deleted “on.”

[12] Deleted “we have—.”

[13] Deleted “on.”

[14] Deleted “ever.”

[15] Deleted “before we go on—.”

[16] Deleted “which.”

[17] Deleted “there, or.”

[18] Deleted “education for—.”

[19] Deleted “Why—.”

[20] Deleted “Socrates.”

[21] Deleted “it—.”

[22] Deleted “that he was—.”

[23] Deleted “Yes this is….”

[24] Deleted “20b, 20a”
[25] Deleted “would not, will not”
[26] Deleted “come to that—we.”

[27] Deleted “that”
[28] Deleted “LS: No, ‘what is—’

R: ‘—the trouble about you?’ (20c 5).”

[29] Deleted “‘what’—yeah, or.”

[30] Deleted “a certain….”

[31] Deleted “that this—.”

[32] Deleted “in a certain way, in another way in.”

[33] Deleted “we must—.”

[34] Deleted “the question is….”

[35] Deleted “compare.”

[36] Deleted “Yeah, well, “is person”—yeah…alright.”

[37] Deleted “Pardon?

Q: Would you repeat the reference for us?

LS: Memorabilia, Book II, chapter 3. Yes. Now, here he refers this—but still….”

[38] Deleted “Chaerephon was….”

[39] Deleted “by.”

[40] Deleted “question prove—the—the.”

[41] Deleted “it doesn’t decide man—.”

[42] Deleted “But.”

[43] Deleted “In the—human beings.”

[44] Deleted “Well—why—.”

[45] Deleted “and others—and.”

[46] Deleted “You might….”

[47] Deleted “of the candy-maker accused…I’m sorry.”

[48] Deleted “From this much, Socrates says—.”

[49] Deleted “that Socrates—.”

[50] Deleted “Socrates, I think—.”

[51] Deleted “have seen in classical—we.”

[52] Deleted “Yeah, well you see, there is….”

[53] Changed from “The question which we cannot take up.”

[54] Deleted “that is a kind of….”

[55] Deleted “he would have to—.”

[56] Deleted “And, so we—I mean—and—.”

[57] Deleted “it.”

[58] Deleted “And—.”

[59] Deleted “You see the point?...this question, that I—.”

[60] Deleted “Xenophon—.”

[61] Deleted “One, two, three [inaudible].”

[62] Deleted “Yeah, “The other things,” namely….”

[63] Deleted “weak—weak speech stronger—.”

[64] Deleted “Yeah.”

[65] Deleted “the wisdom of his own…limited wisdom, the limitations of the fact that—Socrates’s wisdom was wisdom.”

[66] Deleted “very.”

[67] Deleted “Yeah, yeah.”

[68] Deleted “To refute—that would be able, you know—.”

[69] Deleted “if not politicians….”

[70] Changed from “believed to know.”

[71] Deleted “presumably.”
[72] Deleted “before.”
[73] Moved “before.”
[74] Delete “I mean that.”

[75] Deleted “that means—yeah—you know ‘we—.’”

[76] Deleted “You know?”

Sesssion 4: October 27, 1966

Leo Strauss: Now I suppose you have many questions, and partly this may be my doing because I encouraged you. But on the other hand, we must proceed at a somewhat faster pace, and therefore I suggest that we discuss today first the whole section with which we are now concerned, and have a discussion afterward.

I remind [you] again of the context. Socrates was accused by the first accusers of studying the things aloft, et cetera, and of attempting to educate human beings for money. Now this bipartition is identical [to], we can say, or foreshadows or reflects the bipartition of the actual indictment. He flatly denies that he did these things, while indicating that in themselves they are fine things, noble things. To substantiate this denial he appeals to many of the judges as witnesses, namely, to the many who knew of Socrates's doings only through hearsay or at best through what they heard Socrates say on the marketplace. At any rate, Socrates contends that the charge of the first accusers was altogether baseless. Why then did he become the target of slander or persecution? What is Socrates's peculiar *pragma*, his peculiar business? It is Socrates's reaction or response to a Delphic oracle, he says; it is Socrates's post-Delphic business, which leaves one wondering what was his pre-Delphic business. The Delphic oracle was enigmatic and incredible: No one is wiser than Socrates, which Socrates takes to mean Socrates is most wise, not to say the wisest. Socrates tries to refute the oracle. This attempt is based on the assumption that the god might say the untruth. The god doesn't lie—*pseudetai*, in Greek. This is in Greek ambiguous: lying means also unconsciously lying, so the proper translation would be "saying a falsehood," that the god might say the untruth either consciously or unconsciously. Now in the latter case, the god clearly would not be wise if he is mistaken in such an important point, and this would be in accordance with Chaerephon's question which addressed to the god—which, literally taken, it means: Is anybody wiser than Socrates, man or god? But the great event, a miracle, which happened: Socrates's attempt to refute the Oracle turned into a vindication of the oracle.

Now Socrates tried to refute the oracle by discovering men who were wiser than Socrates, and first he goes to the political men. By debunking them Socrates became hated by them, naturally, and those present, those present must have been admirers or followers of the political men, otherwise they would have been amused by Socrates's doings rather than hating him. Socrates conversed with the political men, had dialogues with them. This term does not occur when he speaks of the two other kinds of people, to whom we will turn now, and this in itself would create this impression that Socrates's dialogues are exclusively or chiefly dialogues with political men in contradistinction to the two other groups. We will take this up very soon. Now I ask Mr. Reinken to read the next, 21e3 and following.

Mr. Reinken:

> After this, I went on from one to the other, perceiving that I was hated, and grieving and fearing, but nevertheless I thought I must consider the god's business of the highest importance. So I had to go, investigating the meaning of the oracle,

> to all those who were reputed to know anything. And by the dog, men of Athens—for I must speak the truth to you—this, I do declare, was my experience: those who had the most reputation seemed to me to be almost the most deficient, as I investigated at the god's behest, and others who were of less repute seemed to be superior men in the matter of being sensible. So I must relate to you my wandering as I performed my Herculean labours, so to speak, in order that the oracle might be proved to be irrefutable. (21e4-22a10)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. By the way, "Herculean" is not here, that is an addition of the translator. Now this is the introduction to the center part of the examination and the central stage, which is devoted to the poets. The examination of the oracle and of the political man (because he examines naturally also the oracle while doing it) has as threefold effect on Socrates at this time, as appears here in the beginning: he becomes aware that he is hated; he is pained by this fact; and he is filled with fear because of it. In the center is [that] he becomes pained, which means Socrates would wish to be pleased by refuting the oracle: by refuting the oracle he he would prove to be like the others, like everybody. He would be liked by his fellow citizens, and who would not wish to be liked by his fellow citizens? Yet he goes on in spite of this bad experience. Why? The vindication of the oracle, he says now, is much more important than his well-being. The vindication of the oracle or the understanding of the oracle, that is the same thing, namely, the understanding of it as a true statement is of course a vindication. Or one can also say *obedience* to the oracle, as it comes out.

Now between these remarks, when he speaks of the vindication and finally the obedience, there occurs this strange oath "by the dog." What does—this oath was also used by other people, but of course in the mouth of Socrates it has a Socratic meaning. And the question is: What is that Socratic meaning? I cannot answer that question; it would take much too long. But I can only say one cannot answer it without raising the question: What do dogs mean for Socrates? Do we have any evidence for that? Yes?

Student: Military men in the *Republic*; the military men are compared to dogs.[i]

LS: Ya, and also other people. The dog is called the philosophic animal. Good. That is of course only a restatement of the riddle, but we cannot go beyond that now. Yes?

Student: I was just going to mention . . . that young philosophers are compared to dogs.

LS: Ya, that's also true—to puppies, rather. To puppies. The crucial change from the desire to refute the oracle to obedience to the oracle, this crucial change we may call Socrates's conversion. Before, he was a skeptic, we can say, and after it he was convinced. Perhaps it was a conversion from his youthful *physiologia* to his later political philosophy. Now the result of his further examination of the oracle, or of the Athenians in contradistinction to his examination of the politicians only, the lowly are superior in regard to being sensible, he says here. Now being sensible is surely something noble and good. And Socrates knows that it is noble and good to be

[i] *Republic* 375d10-375e4.

sensible, to be superior in sensibility. Now how is this compatible with his knowledge of ignorance, that he knows that sensibility is good? There is a difficulty here.[1] Or differently stated, to know that something is disgraceful and bad means of course also to know something good and fine, otherwise you couldn't recognize it as disgraceful and bad.

Now let us take the position now prevailing in social science. They also say: We have no knowledge of anything noble and good and no knowledge of values; but they add [that] they also have no knowledge of anything base or bad, and to that extent they are more consistent. How does Socrates overcome this difficulty? Well, roughly like this: men raise claims all the time, they assert that they deserve something good, be it only a good name. That they deserve something good not merely by virtue of their raising the claim, that would be too simple. Their claim must be measured by the standard implied in the claim.[2] If someone says he is a great general, all right, let us see whether he is a great general. But then of course the standard itself must be examined. Perhaps the experience with the use of the standard, with the application of the standard, prepares us for the examination of the standard itself. That might be possible. The result here in Socrates is [that] modesty is more sensible than boasting. A very limited result, but by no means negligible because we see from time to time quite a few boasters, and then we wonder how they do not become aware of it. Now is this result open to doubt, or is this also just an irrational value judgment? I think one can prove that it is a sensible statement because the ridiculous character of the boasting—if the boasting is discovered, of course—contradicts the primary aim of the boaster. He wants to be looked up to, and then when he is debunked, he is despised. So boasting is surely more irrational than being modest, generally speaking. Now let us now come to the examination of the poets.

Mr. Reinken:

> For after the public men I went to the poets, those of tragedies, and those of dithyrambs, and the rest, thinking that there I should prove by actual tests that I was less learned than they. So, taking up the poems of theirs that seemed to me to have been most carefully elaborated by them, I asked them what they meant, that I might at the same time learn something from them. Now I am ashamed to tell you the truth, gentlemen; but still it must be told. For there was hardly a man present, one might say, who would not speak better than they about the poems they themselves had composed. So again in the case of the poets also I presently recognized this, that what they composed they composed not by wisdom, but by nature and because they were inspired, like the prophets and the givers of oracles; for these also say many fine things, but know none of the things they say; it was evident to me that the poets too had experienced something of this same sort. And at the same time I perceived that they, on account of their poetry, thought that they were the wisest of men in other things as well, in which they were not. So I went away from them also thinking that I was superior to them in the same thing in which I excelled the public men. (22a9-22c10)

LS: There is one point, when he says "not by wisdom, but by nature": by some nature. By some nature. A loose modern equivalent would be "by some instinct," but let us leave it at the translation "by some nature." So Socrates approaches the poets in the hope there clearly to refute

the oracle, because the poets were famous for their wisdom. He does not mention explicitly the comic poets, as you have seen. The poets are most obviously wise; they have great excellences. Socrates did not speak of the excellences of the political men, as you will have seen, so that Socrates shows here by silence a high regard for the poets. Never forget that. Yet the poets[3] do not possess wisdom, that is to say, knowledge. They do what they do by virtue of some nature, like the seers; for the latter, like the poets, say many fine things without knowing it. But the poets are misled by their great achievements into believing that they are wise in other things too. You must also have observed that Socrates says nothing to the effect that he became hated by the poets as he became hated by the political men, nor does he say that he tried to convince the poets of their lack of knowledge. There is no dialogue, no *dialegesthai*, with them. Socrates implies in c5 to 6 that the poets have some wisdom, but he is silent on the rank of that wisdom. He says nothing of his examination of the seers. Socrates says that the seers and poets "say many fine things"; he does not say, as he does in the *Meno*, at the end [of the dialogue], that the seers and the poets say many true things. Something fine is not necessarily true. There is a point which Burnet makes on 22b7 [about] those present: "'the company present when Socrates made the experiment, not those present in the court."[ii] (Burnet 1964, 174)[4] [It] seems to be quite obvious that he means that, but I think it is more important to note that Socrates apparently did not examine the poets in the marketplace, whereas he might very well have examined the political men in the marketplace. In the case of the political men, he says that there were many around; here he doesn't say that there were many around. This is all I have to say now about this passage. And now let us come to the third stage.

Mr. Reinken: "Finally then I went to the hand-workers. For I was conscious that I knew practically nothing, but I knew I should find that they knew many fine things. And in this I was not deceived; they did know what I did not, and in this way they were wiser than I. But, men of Athens, the good artisans also seemed to me to have the same failing as the—" (22d1-22d6)

LS: No, that is wrongly translated. "In this they seem to me to suffer from the same fault, like the poets and the good artisans." The handicraftsmen are not the artisans. I'll come to that later. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> But, then[iii] also seemed to me to have the same failing as the poets and the good artisans; because[iv] of practicing his art well, each one thought he was very wise in the other most important matters, and this folly of theirs obscured that wisdom, so that I asked myself in behalf of the oracle whether I should prefer to be as I am, neither wise in their wisdom nor foolish in their folly, or to be in both respects as they are. I replied then to myself and to the oracle that it was better for me to be as I am. (22d5-22e6)

LS: Now this handicraftsmen, the third stage, and last stage: from this it follows that the poets are the center stage. I'll make now a dogmatic assertion, and you don't have to believe it of me,

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[ii] In original: "those now present in court"
[iii] In original: "But, men of Athens, they"
[iv] In original: "as the poets; because"

of course, that *règle générale*, general rule: whenever Plato makes an enumeration, the central item is the most important. That is an experience of many years, and I have nowhere found this stated through Plato. I have read something in ancient authors why this is so, but this would—[5]I will postpone that. The poets are in a way the peak. Most important does not necessarily mean most important absolutely; it may mean most important in the present context, so one has to use one's head. Socrates knew of the handicraftsmen in advance that they truly knew. The word used, *epistantai*—from which *epistēmē*, science, is derived—I translate it now, that they "truly knew many fine things." No such knowledge, true knowledge, was said in the case of the politicians and the poets. To that extent there is an order of ascent: the lowest of the low are the politicians, then the poets, and then the shoemakers and other simple craftsmen. This is not too surprising. *Republic* 10: the maker of the bed, the carpenter, is higher than the painter or poet,[v] ya? Good. Yet otherwise these handicraftsmen prove to suffer from the same defect as the two preceding kinds of men. They claim to be wise in the greatest things, regarding the greatest things, which implies [that] quite a few men do know some fine and good things. They possess general knowledge of them, but the only ultimately interesting question is to have knowledge of the greatest things, of the most comprehensive things. Not all men are ignorant, but all men are ignorant regarding the greatest things, and this affects indeed their knowledge of the many fine things they know, because they are ultimately unable to give an account of what they are doing. Simple case: a shoemaker. He can answer every question you put to him—why he uses this kind of leather or that, why he makes this move rather than that—but when it comes to the question: What is his whole art for? Protection of feet. That has something to do with health, and this has ultimately to do with preservation of life. And the question arises: Is life preferable to death? The shoemaker is of course not competent as shoemaker unless he is a wise man. Now these handicraftsmen execute their art finally, for example, making shoes. There, I repeat, in the case of the handicraftsmen as well as in that of the poets, there is no mention of dialogue, conversation, or of the presence of many at the examination, and of the examination leading to hatred of Socrates. I infer that what made Socrates hated was above all his public examination in the marketplace of the politicians, perhaps especially of the democratic politicians. And [6]this would make us wonder: Were those politicians and their followers not the first accusers par excellence?

Now, since we are through now with the examination, we have to raise the question: What kind of people were not examined by Socrates? Well, those he doesn't mention, the mere laborers, completely unskilled workers: the peasants, cultivators of the soil,[7] the traders[8], as well as the men who were merely doing their own business, i.e., all men whom no one, including themselves, would regard as wise. There, no examination was needed. Now this expression, "the good craftsmen," *hoi agathoi dēmiourgoi*, in d6, this is obviously something different from the handicraftsmen. Well, what could that be? Such people like physicians, sculptors, orators—they are not handicraftsmen and yet they are *dēmiourgoi*, craftsmen of a sort. But why does he speak of, emphasize the good? He makes no such distinction in the case of the political men—they are all rotten, or of the poets—they are all inspired. So the distinction between good and bad doesn't arise for different reasons. Does he mean the decent orators? Well, that there could be decent orators is indicated by Socrates at the very beginning, at the end of the proemium when he

[v] *Republic* 602b5-602c3.

speaks of the duty of the orator, of a man in his position now to say the truth. And therefore there could be—since Socrates is a speaker here, there could be a good speaker.

However this may be, there is one more general conclusion of great importance. When we compare this presentation that the Platonic Socrates gives of his own doing with that given by Plato in the rest of his work, we make this strange observation: there are hardly any Socratic dialogues with politicians, poets, and handicraftsmen. Here we get the impression that Socrates is a kind of Uncle Sam, pointing his finger at each of you, and[9] buttonholing you and saying: "Did you examine yourself today? [Laughter] Did you raise a question about virtue today?" Now this doesn't happen anywhere. There is no dialogue with poets except at the end of the *Banquet*, where it is only referred to in general ways.[vi] There is no discussion with craftsmen, with handicraftsmen, and there are very few conversations with actual politicians. Very few. With young men who want to go into politics quite a few, but not with actual politicians. So that is a fact of some importance for the understanding of the popular presentation, the self-presentation of Socrates when he was accused, compared with Socrates's actual life as Plato presented it.

Now in the sequel, up to 24b2, Socrates speaks of the total result of his vindication of the oracle or, what is the same thing, of his examination of the Athenians. And this total result is bipartite, like the charge and like the accusers. Now let us first read the first part of the total result. 22e6, following.

Mr. Reinken:

> Now from this investigation, men of Athens, many enmities have arisen against me, and such as are most harsh and grievous, so that many slanders[vii] have resulted from them and I am called a wise man. For in each occasion those who are present think I am wise in the matters in which I confute someone else; but the fact is, gentlemen, it is likely that the god is really wise and by his oracle means this: "Human wisdom is of little or no value." And it appears that he does not really say this of Socrates, but merely uses my name, and makes me an example, as if he were to say: "This one of you, O human beings, is wisest, who, like Socrates, recognizes that he is in truth of no account in respect to wisdom."
>
> Therefore I am still even now going about and searching and investigating at the god's behest anyone, whether citizen or foreigner, who I think is wise; and when he does not seem so to me, I give aid to the god and show that he is not wise. And by reason of this occupation, I have no leisure to attend to any of the affairs of the state worth mentioning, or of my own, but am in vast poverty on account of my service to the god. (22e7-23c1)

LS: "In ten-thousand-fold poverty."

Mr. Reinken: "And in addition to these—" (23c2)

[vi] *Symposium* 199c3-201c11.
[vii] In original: "prejudices"

LS: Now, let us stop here. Now you see Socrates in this summary blurs the distinction between his examination of the politicians on the one hand, and his examination of the poets and the handicraftsmen on the other. By this he minimizes the political issue to which he alluded already before, in 20a1, as you may recall, when he spoke of the difference between being a companion of Socrates and being a companion of the multitude of the Athenians. So Socrates became hated as a wise man, meaning as superior to all in wisdom. And that hate has a more specific character, as we can know: namely, it is envy. It is envy. But Socrates repeats [that] he is not wise; only the god is wise, we can say, but this is not what he says here. The god seems to be truly wise by suggesting through his oracle that human wisdom is of little or no worth and that it is in the best case, like the wisdom of Socrates, knowledge of one's ignorance. So still, while it is of hardly any worth, it is more than most people have and therefore some envy would be understandable.

Now although all this was settled[10] some time ago, Socrates continued his examination of everyone whom he believed to be wise, that is to say, not of *every* Athenian. Both citizens and foreigners now come in, like the sophists. He intimates that in some cases the men examined were truly wise. In those cases he in fact refuted the oracle. By[11] continuing his examination he continued to come to the assistance of the god, which assistance he identifies with service to the god or worship of the god, the god of course being in all cases Apollo. For one can rightly say: Why does the god demand worship if he does not need it? This argument is presented in the dialogue *Euthyphro*.[viii] Through his serving the god, Socrates became generally hated and, in addition, he became unable to take care of the affairs of the city and of his domestic affairs so that he lives in ten-thousandfold poverty—in a very rich poverty, ten-thousandfold. Socrates's attempt to refute the oracle turned into service of the god, into a divine mission. This is the most powerful refutation of the charge of atheism. It precedes his explicit discussion of that charge, for as we shall see soon [that] Socrates's examination of the Athenians did not by itself give rise to the charge of atheism or to any [other] charge.[12] We turn now to the second part of the total result, and read first where we left off.

Mr. Reinken: "And in addition to these things, the young men who have the most leisure, the sons of the richest men, accompany—" (23c2-23c4)

LS: You see the contrast, the poorest Socrates and the richest young men. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> accompany me of their own accord, find pleasure in hearing people being examined, and often imitate me themselves, and then they undertake to examine others; and then, I fancy, they find a great plenty of people who think they know something, but know little or nothing. As a result, therefore, those who were examined by them are angry with me, instead of being angry with themselves, and say that "Socrates is a most—" (23c4-23c11)

LS: No, "there is some Socrates."

[viii] *Euthyphro* 14e9-15a6.

Mr. Reinken:

> "There is some Socrates, a most abominable person, who is corrupting the youth."[ix]
>
> And when anyone asks him, "by doing or teaching what?" they have nothing to say, but they do not know, and that they may not seem to be at a loss, they say these things that are handy to say against all the philosophers, "the things in the air and the things beneath the earth" and "not to believe in the gods" and "to make the weaker argument the stronger." For they would not, I fancy— (23c4-23d9)

LS: Now let us stop here then. So now the first factor was Socrates's examination of the Athenians. The second and the decisive factor is Socrates's young followers. They belong to the wealthiest part of the Athenians, i.e., not to the demos, and they derive amusement from Socrates's debunking these pompous asses. We can say that they derive their amusement from Socrates's gravely and solemnly serving the god. They don't look at it quite in this way. Socrates's reaction was different: he was not amused but in a way gladdened by his vindication of the oracle, which is something very different [and] not funny. He was not amused by the contrast between the claim and the fact. Now these young men imitate Socrates successfully in examining the Athenians. The examined people become angry at Socrates and not at these young men who ridicule them in public and say that Socrates corrupts the young.

This is the first time that this part of the charge is explicitly mentioned. In the first mentioning, especially in 18b to c, there is nothing said of corruption of the young. That comes in here. This part of the actual charge comes first; the first reaction of these people is: Socrates corrupts the young. It arises as the immediate consequence of what the young people are doing. But when someone asks the accusers: By doing what, by teaching what does Socrates corrupt the young? they have no answer. And in their embarrassment, they say of Socrates what is ready to hand on all philosophizing men: he doesn't believe in gods, and so on. You see here, [in] the enumeration we have here not believing in gods is in the center. It is now for the first time a part of the charge. Formerly it was only an inference of the listeners, you remember; here it is now a part of the charge and, in addition as I said, central. The same people then accuse Socrates of studying the things aloft, et cetera, and of atheism. Originally he had said that the atheism charge was an inference of those who listened to the first accusers and thus implied that the first accusers were more educated or more sophisticated or perhaps closer to Socrates than the mere listeners. Now we learn that the first accusers themselves accused Socrates of atheism, and that is to say they were not superior but rather inferior to the listeners. The first accusers were especially the individuals debunked by Socrates's young, very wealthy, fun-seeking followers. The first accusers were pompous asses, that is implied in that. The atheism charge is traced to the first accusers after they have been thoroughly debunked. The debunking of the first accusers proceeds in an equal step, *pari passu*, with debunking of the atheism charge.

One great difficulty remains. The examination of the Athenians took place after the oracle. What did Socrates do prior to the oracle? I repeat this question. And this question is of course not

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[ix] In original: "and say that 'Socrates is a most abominable person and is corrupting the youth.'"

answered in the *Apology*. There is a parallel case in the beginning of the *Republic* regarding old Cephalus. Some of you have made his acquaintance. He[13] makes clear the advantage which he derives from his great wealth when he is very old and expects to die soon.[x] He forces us to raise the question: What advantage did he derive from his great wealth when he was young or of middle age? We also don't get an answer. So this procedure of Plato here is not unique. The young men, he said, acted spontaneously.[14] What Socrates did seemed to be so attractive to them so that they spontaneously imitated it. Socrates did not act spontaneously; Socrates acted by the prompting or the challenge of the oracle. Good. Now let us turn to the rest of this passage.

Mr. Reinken:

> For they would not, I fancy, care to say the truth, that it is being made very clear that they pretend to know, but know nothing. Since, then, they are jealous of their honour and energetic and numerous and speak concertedly and persuasively about me, they have filled your ears both long ago and now with vehement slanders. From among them Meletus attacked me, and Anytus and Lycon, Meletus angered on account of the poets, and Anytus on account of the artisans and the political[xi] men, and Lycon on account of the orators; so that, as I said in the beginning, I should be surprised if I were able to remove this slander[xii] from you in so short a time when it has grown so great. There you have the truth, men of Athens, and I speak without hiding anything from you, great or small or prevaricating. And yet I know pretty well that I am making myself hated by just that conduct; which is also a proof that I am speaking the truth and that this is the slander[xiii] against me and these are its causes. And whether you investigate this now or hereafter, you will find that it is so. (23d8-24b2)

LS: Thank you. Now this is the end of the discussion regarding the first accusers. To that, we can perhaps state this as follows: that Socrates did these unpopular things, namely, investigating the things aloft and so on, is of course a lie, a slander. The assertion that he did this is a substitute for another unpopular truth, namely, that no one is wise. The latter truth is unpopular because of the love of honor, the ambition of the many men concerned.[15] Their boasting implies, their self-assurance implies that they are wise in the most important things: in the affairs of the polis, how to conduct domestic and foreign affairs. These many men are impetuous and speak vigorously and persuasively about Socrates. Thus they have succeeded[16] [for] a long time in filling Socrates's judges with a strong prejudice against him. The first accusers are then those successfully debunked by Socrates's young followers. That comes out now. But [one can rightly say]: Why not also those debunked by Socrates himself[17]? In that case, there is an answer to that. If they were the men debunked by Socrates himself, then Socrates would know the names of them, and he says: I don't know the names of the first accusers. This is clearly contradicted, I admit that, by Socrates's saying in the [first] passage[18] on the examination of the politicians[19]: It's not necessary to mention his name. So he wouldn't say that if he did not know the name.

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[x] *Republic* 330a5-330a6.
[xi] In original: "public"
[xii] In original: "prejudice"
[xiii] In original: "prejudice"

This is a minor but not uninteresting contradiction. "From among"—that, I think, we must translate differently. How did he say, when in e3, on the basis—

Mr. Reinken: "From among them."

LS: [20c]"From among the first accusers are the three present accusers." That is to say, there is no difference between the first and second accusers. Anytus is here in the center, rightly, because he was the most powerful man of the enemies of Socrates. He attacks Socrates on behalf of the craftsmen and the politicians. He was a tanner, an ill-smelling profession, and therefore an object of ridicule on the part of the comic poets. But Lycon, who had not been mentioned before, is said to attack Socrates on behalf of the orators. Why does Socrates make here a distinction between the political men and the orators? I see only one reason: he denies to Anytus the title of an orator. What reason he had for that I do not know, because we do not know sufficiently of Anytus.[21] But this I think is necessary: the distinction between orators and politicians shows us that the tripartition used in Socrates's account of his examination is incomplete. Well, there can be no doubt. He indicated that already before, when he said he examined anyone who seemed to him to be wise, Athenian or stranger. So there may have been some wise men in the other kinds of men whom Socrates examined.

Now there are a few points in Burnet's commentary which I think we should briefly mention, in 23e3. Ya, this is the passage where we said "of these are Meletus" and so on. And he says on the strength of this[22] faith [that] "Socrates means that his present accusers are taking advantage of the old slander"[xiv] (Burnet 1964, 179). And he refers then to 19b1, where Socrates says: "my slander in which Meletus trusted when he wrote the present indictment." Well, Burnet assumes (and he is not the only one to assume) that there is no progress in Socrates's speech, no shifting of the perspective or ground—or more generally stated, that there are identical repetitions. I think that that would need a proof, the assertion that there is an identical repetition. There are always, as far as I have observed, some differences between the first and the second statement. Now another point [of] Burnet's in 23e 5:

> Anytus was a master-tanner, as Cleon had been before him, but he was also one of the two or three leading statesmen of the time. There is a real point in making him a representative of two crafts.[xv] He is a type of those craftsmen[xvi] who fancied that, because they knew their own business, they were wise in other matters which they knew nothing about. There cannot be any doubt that Socrates maintained the doctrine of "one man, one trade", which Plato represents him as making the foundation of his ideal state, and this sentence is a gentle reminder of his objection to business men in government." (Burnet 1964, 179) [Laughter]

[xiv] In original: "old *diabole*"
[xv] In original: two classes"
[xvi] In original: "*demiourgoi*"

Good. There's something funny in that, you see. Now is one man, one trade the Socratic doctrine? Is this so unqualifiedly true? What do you say to that? Some of you have read the *Republic*. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: Well, he suggests that[23] the moneymaking art is involved in several arts.

LS: Ya, in other words, even the shoemaker, you mean, because he is both a shoemaker and a practitioner of the moneymaking art? Ya, but in the ideal state, as he calls it, they don't make money.[xvii]

Mr. Reinken: At the peak, philosophers will have to take up the sideline of being kings or vice versa.

LS: And, at the end of the *Banquet* the comic poet must also be a tragic poet.[xviii] And even in the *Republic*, the sons of Asclepius are praised because they combine the art of the warrior with the art of the physician.[xix] These are the things which occur to me immediately. So it is not so simple, and surely the businessmen—that is very improperly stated. The truth in it would be this: Socrates [was] not a businessman. Socrates was not a democrat. The businessmen in contradistinction to a landed property-owner, that was was a practically important point. Here is another one—well, I think we do not have to go into that. 24a. Now there is something here. In 24a1 to 4, immediately after he had mentioned Lycon, will you read this sentence again?

Mr. Reinken: "so that, as I said in the beginning, I should be surprised if I were able to remove this slander from you in so short a time when it has grown so great." (24a1-24a4)

LS: Ya. Now here we have a reference to something that Socrates said before, apparently a literal repetition. Now if we turn to the first statement in 18e5 following, Socrates says: "I must try to remove in so short a time this slander which you have been exposed to for so long a time."[xx] The phrase is ambiguous and it may mean: "I wonder whether I shall be able to remove from you this slander which has become so powerful in so short a time," namely, in the short time after the Delphic oracle. That is here ambiguous, and that is a great difference because there was no ambiguity in the first statement.

In the sequel here of this passage: "this is the complete truth about the content and the causes of the prejudice against me. And yet I know rather well that by laying bare the background of the charge, I make myself hated." Why does he make himself hated by laying bare the background of the charge, the prehistory of the charge? He makes himself hated by the jury, who do not wish to[24] have their heroes or themselves debunked. And this fact, namely, your present hostile reaction to what Socrates just said, testifies to Socrates telling the truth. They see quite well that

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[xvii] *Republic* 434a9-434b7.
[xviii] *Symposium* 223d 5-223d7.
[xix] *Republic* 407e 3-408a2.
[xx] In original: "make a defense, men of Athens, and must try to remove from you this prejudice which you have been for so long a time acquiring."

Socrates is not speaking here of people with whom they are in no way identical or do not identify themselves, but Socrates tells them point blank: I have discovered you or those whom you admire most to be pompous asses. Then naturally they are angry at him, and you can't blame them too much if they condemn him, human nature being what it is. So this much about the charge, about the defense of Socrates against the first accusers. Before we turn to the present charge, the later charge, we can have a short discussion. Yes?

Student: Isn't it possible that he also means when he says that even though it's true that inasmuch as he's obviously making himself less popular rather than more popular, it's obvious that he isn't trying to lie or get out of the charge, and that the only reason he'd say such a thing would be that is true?

LS: Yes, but still it is a great difference. Sure, that is quite true, but the question is, of course, even if Socrates was perfectly reconciled to his being condemned and executed, it makes a difference on what ground. I'll tell you a story, not from Plato but from Xenophon. When Socrates was condemned to death, one of his more enthusiastic and irrational admirers[25] said: How terrible, Socrates, that you have been unjustly condemned to death; whereupon Socrates said: Would you wish me to be condemned justly? [Laughter] So here is the same point, you know,[26] he might have no objection to being condemned, but he may well have had the greatest objection to being condemned on certain grounds rather than others. If he was condemned to death because he made a nuisance of himself by being a gadfly, that was one thing; but if he was condemned to death as an atheist, that was another thing, very obviously. I mean, quite neutrally speaking, Socrates was not alone; there were these young people with whom he was associated, and their fate would be affected by the grounds on which he was condemned.

Student: Isn't there a sense in which Socrates might be considered guilty from his own testimony?[27] You were saying in the first lecture of the class, the city's basis of justice is the ancestral and Socrates, by teaching the children to debunk their elders has taught them, has in effect corrupted them by making them examine that which is elderly and the foundation of the city?

LS: Yes, but it is not so simple. Socrates doesn't say that, doesn't admit that. He says these young men who followed him examine Athenians; he doesn't say that they examine their fathers or grandfathers or uncles, you know? And there is nothing wrong with debunking a stranger. Surely one can surely say, if one wants to be very precise, that this could very well imply also debunking one's own father. It could also mean that. Then it would be somewhat graver. But even in that case, there is a possible excuse because if the father pretends to be wiser and is in fact very unwise, then in a way one can say he had it coming. But I admit that it's a more delicate situation. In the *Clouds* Socrates is presented as teaching a son to beat his father, beating being a sign of superior wisdom—you know, just as parents are supposed to spank their children in order to educate them, and they are supposed to do that because they are supposed to be wiser and as it were to instill wisdom via the rod. And if this is true, if the wiser may spank the less wise, then the wise son may spank his uncle or father. So this problem was there, no doubt; but it is not explicitly mentioned here, for obvious reasons. Yes?

Student: [28]Well, we began by asking the question whether Socrates could be wiser than the oracle at one time. Did the oracle say that Socrates was wiser than the oracle? And when Socrates is examining the poets, it says that he examines the poets, and in our text it translated "seers," as givers of oracles.[29] But he says at one point that these—

LS: But these are of course not the gods, but human beings.[30] The Pythia is in some sense—ya, all right.

Same student: What it is he[31] seems here to conjoin, the knowledge that oracles and poets possess[32]—he distinguishes between the knowledge in which he considers wisdom to play and prophecy and he says at the end of that section that he went away knowing—thinking that he was superior to them.

LS: Yes, because if he said something, he would be able to give the reasons why he said that, whereas the seer as well as the poet . . . would not know the reason. I mean, the inspired seer would only know that he was inspired to say that.[33] I believe I mentioned this, that he doesn't say that they are, say, many true things; he says many fine things, which is not identical. It's not the same thing. For example, untruths can be presented very finely, and then it is something fine without being true. Yes?

Student: In the same passage, he says, "I asked them what they meant," and you maintain that there wasn't a dialogue between Socrates and the poets.

LS: Ya, but[34] if Socrates asked a poet: Why did you introduce this character, or make the chorus sing this particular song? and the poet just looks with amazement at the question and is silent, can you call this a dialogue? Well, in a sense, yes, but it's a very—an abortive dialogue, one could say, whereas in the case of the statesmen he explicitly speaks of *dialegesthai*, of having a conversation. I believe that Plato is very careful in these things; if he avoids the term . . . what would be true in the case of the seers? She doesn't know, the Pythia, why she said this to Chaerephon. The god Apollo inspired her to do that. Yes?

Student: You drew the distinction that Socrates was unwilling to call Anytus an orator. In the beginning, Socrates mentions that of all of his accusers, or at least he doesn't distinguish in the first page—he says, "quote so persuasively did they talk" (17a3-17a4). And later on: "not, however, men of Athens, speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are" (17b10-17c2). Now what I'm wondering is in what sense could Meletus be considered an orator and Anytus couldn't, in the light of—

LS: Ya, but that is I believe not difficult to answer on the basis of what we said on the beginning of the *Apology*.[35] I stated it at that time as follows: they presented Socrates as a clever speaker, and Socrates says: Well, you only have to listen to me, you will see that I'm not a clever speaker. Hence the accusers were not clever speakers because they were impudent liars. You remember that? Therefore[36] you can say that they were bad orators, but the difference between a bad orator and not being an orator at all can be disregarded on quite a few occasions. We do this all the time—I mean, between a very poor TV repairman and a man who[37] has no knowledge of TV at

all, the difference is practically irrelevant, and so we can also say the difference between a[38] poor orator and a non-orator is practically irrelevant. . . .

Student: At 23b 6[39] Socrates makes the statement that he was foreigner or citizen. Do we find this to be strictly true within the dialogue itself? For instance, the sophists. Socrates says . . . .

LS: He does not examine?

Same student: Accounting that—

LS: No.

Same student: That after he gives an account of their philosophy. And then he goes on further, and asks him whether he would like to engage in a dialogue or whether he would like to maybe fish.

LS: Well, but is this whatever he does, whether he permits the man to engage in a long speech or only give short answers, in both cases it is an examination. Have you read the *Gorgias*, for exampe? Does he not examine Gorgias? Of course he is a polite man; he wouldn't say: And now I'm going to examine you. [Laughter] But in fact, and in the case of Protagoras or of anyone else, he examined them. Thrasymachus in the *Republic*: he examined him, all right. But what is remarkable is this: "and if he does not seem to be wise to me," or "when he doesn't seem to be wise, then I show with the assistance of the god that he is not wise." The qualification "when he doesn't seem to be wise to me": in some cases the man examined might be wise, that's not excluded. Yes?

Student: . . . he examined the stranger in order to debunk him, I mean, there was never any kind of outcome.

LS: Well, why not? Think of the situation in the *Protagoras*. At the beginning, young Hippocrates is very eager to become a disciple of Protagoras. Socrates debunks Protagoras in order to protect poor Hippocrates. It's very important to debunk strangers, namely, if they are so exacting as, say, Protagoras is.

Student: Then again, in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates says that he'd rather talk to the young men of Athens and not to foreigners, no matter how smart they are.[xxi]

LS: No, but he has to talk to Theaetetus because the venerable teacher of Theaetetus, old Theodorus, doesn't wish to engage in conversation. Theodorus was a foreigner and Theaetetus an Athenian.[40] Socrates[41] says later on in the *Apology* that he prefers the Athenians for this purpose because he has a naturally stronger attachment to Athenians than to foreigners, but if these foreigners are particularly strongly pretending to wisdom, he would of course examine

[xxi] *Theaetetus* 143d1-143e3.

them, and especially if many Athenians are impressed by their wisdom . . . . Did you want to say something?

Student: Yes. If the poets are not among his first accusers, if they're not angry at him, what is it that leads Meletus to lead the attack?

LS: [42]I think I gave an answer to this question, but I will repeat it. When we read this statement about the three kinds of people, we see that he speaks of becoming hated only in the case of the politicians, not in the case of the poets nor in the case of the handicraftsmen. Good. And from this I inferred that[43], at least up to this point, it is suggested to us that the first or primary accusers were the politicians and the admirers and followers of the politicians, not the two other classes. But then[44] after he had made the suggestion he drops it, and the final statement is at the beginning of 22e6, following, that this distinction between the three classes is unimportant, but we have nevertheless had this indication which we must not completely forget. Yes?

Student: Could not the *Gorgias* be understood as a dialogue in which the orators are examined?

LS: Yes. Well, in the first place, Gorgias himself. And only think of what is the situation at the beginning, which is roughly this: that Gorgias says he is not responsible if people whom he teaches the art of speaking use it for wrong purposes, as little as a teacher of boxing or of shooting is responsible if the pupil becomes a murderer.[xxii] And that means that the art of speaking is neutral in regard to justice and injustice, and this is a grave thing. Thereupon Gorgias is asked: But must you not do something against possible misuse of what you teach them? In other words: Must you not teach them justice before you teach them any cleverness which they might use unjustly? And then Gorgias says: Well, if they don't happen to know [LS chuckles] what is just when they come to me, I might tell them what is just. You can imagine what kind of instruction in justice that is, if he would tell him: Never cheat, never murder. That can make a deep impression on a sufficiently nasty young man. So clearly, he's examined. He's sitting on the horns of a dilemma. And the same is even more obvious in the case of the examination of Polus, which takes up a much larger part of the *Gorgias*. Polus is also a professional orator, teacher of rhetoric. So they are all examined.[45] Do you [know] any Platonic dialogue where no examination takes place? No, I ask you not as a trap, but honestly. Are Glaucon and Adeimantus in the *Republic* not examined? I mean, are they not examined by the mere fact that, for example, when Socrates discusses war in the Fifth Book of the *Republic* and then Socrates says[46] the things which should not be done in war, like burning down a house unnecessarily, and killing—killing of civilians, as we would say—and looting, and so on and so on,[xxiii] and when you read Glaucon's reaction to that and Glaucon makes then a distinction: Yes, one shouldn't do that in wars against Greeks; but in wars against barbarians, that is another story. Well, is this not an examination of Glaucon's character?[47] I mean, that takes place all the time. I would say unless it is a dialogue in which Socrates is examined, that is very rare, like the *Parmenides*, in a sense—

[xxii] *Gorgias* 456a8-457c4.
[xxiii] *Republic* 471a8-471c1.

Socrates is very young—but in a way also in the *Banquet*, when he is examined by Diotima.[xxiv] That also could happen. Mr. . . . .

Student: The *Timaeus*.[48]

LS: Ya, but there of course he is not examined, except to the extent that he seems to show he could not make that speech. But this is not certain. It[49] is also possible that he did not wish to make that speech about the universe, but that is not the clear case, I would say. At any rate, I mean the general rule is that the interlocutors of Socrates are always examined, without Socrates necessarily intending it to be. But they reveal themselves.

Student: But is it these orators who are accusing him, or—

LS: No,[50] we make a simple distinction: these are not rhetoricians of whom he speaks here, but orators. Let us say that a rhetorician is the teacher of an[51] orator, and an orator is the man who executes the art itself, ya?

Student: What about the *Apology* itself?[52]

LS: In the *Apology*, yes. Is there anyone examined here?

Student: Well, Meletus, but also—

LS: Meletus, surely.

Student: But Socrates himself. He is being forced to make—

LS: Yes, that is true, but does he not also, by the way in which he speaks ad hominem towards the Athenian jury, examine them? And reveal them to us and, if possible, to themselves? Does he not also do that? So in other words, it is too simple to understand the examiner along the lines of this Uncle Sam, you know: "Did you examine yourself today? I want you." That is not the way in which Socrates proceeds. Are there any other—yes?

Student: Could you explain the connection between the charge that Socrates investigates the things in the heavens and in the earth and that he makes the weaker speech seem the stronger? They seem to be somehow connected in the accusation, whereas we would normally think of making the weaker speech seem the stronger is not a part of the natural scientist but more of a sophist or . . . .

LS: Yes. That we would do on the basis of the Platonic tradition already—I mean, you know, by taking a general and vague familiarity with Plato. If you take Aristophanes's *Clouds*, surely taking into consideration that it is a comedy (and never forget that), nevertheless, what does Socrates do there? Two things. He is a physiologist, a student of nature, and he is a teacher of

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[xxiv] *Symposium* 201d1-203b3.

rhetoric. So apparently there was thought to be a connection between these seemingly totally heterogeneous things. Don't forget that the men like Gorgias and Protagoras also were concerned with the nature of things. Rhetoric, the art of speaking, in other words, this cannot be elaborated properly—scientifically, as we say—without knowledge of the nature of things. Proof: Plato's own *Phaedrus*, where this is said; so that to speak well in the strict sense presupposes that one think well, but how can one think well if one does not think well about the most comprehensive things? *Physiologia* in the wide sense. This is more difficult. So—yes?

Student: But why does thinking about *physiologia* lead to speaking well, or to the art of rhetoric?

LS: Just turn around what I said now. If you think well, you are by this fact enabled—perhaps not yet completely enabled—to speak well. If you think well, you may still need some other knowledge in order to speak well. If you think of the exernals, for example, the use of gestures, and when you should smile and when you should look grave, that is not really implied in that; that needs some special arrangement.[53] So speaking well requires something in addition, otherwise there would be no rhetoric [as] a separate study. But if you think well you fulfill the most important condition for speaking well.

Student: But that's not making the weaker speech stronger.

LS: No, and therefore it is also interesting that in the actual charge[54], making the weaker speech stronger doesn't occur.[55] I mean, the simplest way of understanding it (I don't say the only way) is to look at the Socrates of the *Clouds*. I mean, Socrates, the pre-Delphic Socrates (whenever it was . . . 430 or 440, no one can say that) combined as other men did to *physiologia* with rhetoric. This was also the general notion, that [56]there is this strange thing coming up in Athens (which didn't exist before in Athens, at any rate; maybe it existed in other places like Sicily) that men combined *physiologia* with rhetoric. And both are suspect, the first because that is not a man's business to pry into the secrets of the gods, to look at, to study the things aloft; and the other is [57]to make the weaker speech stronger is obviously something disreputable. So you wanted to say something—no, you.

Student: In the case of the artisans, I was wondering: Is the fact that they're carrying on their own art skillfully causes them to believe they know many other and greater things—is that just some sort of accident due perhaps to the political situation in Athens, in a democracy, or is it something intrinsic to, say, a shoemaker, that he has potential beyond shoemaking?

LS: It seems to be—Socrates seems to presuppose such an inclination that one overestimates one's specialty [58]and thinks that this particular field in which one has solid knowledge is the most important. That seems to be implied. But he doesn't say that[59] all craftsmen would . . . . Now then, I suggest that we begin today—we just have time for that—with the speech against the present accusers.

Mr. Reinken: [60]"Now so far as the accusations are concerned which my first accusers made against me, this is a sufficient defence before you—" (24b2-24b4)

LS: No, "let this be a sufficient defense."

Mr. Reinken: Let this be.

LS: Ya.

Mr. Reinken:

> but against Meletus, the good and patriotic, as he says, and the later ones, I will try to defend myself next. So once more, as if these were another set of accusers, let us take up in turn their sworn statement. It is about as follows: it states that Socrates is a wrongdoer because he corrupts the youth and does not believe in the gods the state—city[xxv] believes in, but in other new spiritual beings. (24b4-24c1)

LS: Yes, that is impossible. Daimonic things, let us say.

Mr. Reinken: "Daimonic things."

LS: We will later on find out what that means.

Mr. Reinken: "but in other new daimonic things. Such is the accusation." (24c1-24c2)

LS: Yes, something like "of this kind is the accusation."

Mr. Reinken: "this kind is the accusation. But let us examine each point of this accusation." (24c2-24c3)

LS: Now let us stop here.[61] We begin now the defense against the present accusers and more particularly against Meletus. This section which we read is the introduction. Socrates makes first an explicit transition from the first accusers to the present one, and then quotes the present indictment here at the very beginning: "let this defense be sufficient before you," he says. Now in Greek it is *pros humas*, followed immediately by *pros de Meleton*. Now there is a certain allusion in this because the same Greek word, *pros*, is used in two different senses. First, it means "about the first accusers, let this be enough of a defense toward you," "with a view to you"; in Latin *ad vos*, *ad hominem*, "toward you." And then in the case of Meletus, it means "against Meletus." Now "as if there were another set of accusers," he says in b7 [24b6-24b7]. Well, that is what I suspected all the time. There are no other two sets of accusers. There was only one set of accusers and there were no first accusers.

Now, when he comes to the charge, to quote him in this: "it runs somehow in the following manner," i.e., he says from the beginning, "it is not the literal charge." And at the end he says "the indictment is of this kind." The charge is not literally quoted. And we have to discuss it quickly. The charge has been preserved in Diogenes Laërtius, Book 2, section 40, and I'll read it

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[xxv] In original: "state"

to you, but you have to look at the Platonic text to see the differences. "Socrates commits a crime or acts unjustly by not believing the gods which the city believes, but introducing other new daimonic things. He also commits an unjust act by corrupting the young."[xxvi] This wording is almost identical with that which we find at the beginning of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.[xxvii] Xenophon also doesn't quote literally. He also says, "the charge was *toiade tis*," "some of this," "about of this kind," but Xenophon makes only an infinitesimal[62] change. He changes *eisegoumenos*, which I translate by "introducing," by *eispheron*, which means "bringing in." So, well, the first means literally "lead in"; and Xenophon says "bring in." A very subtle change, compared with the immense changes[63] which Plato makes.

Now what are the Platonic changes? There are four which I observe. First, Socrates brings the corruption charge prior to the impiety charge, the atheism charge. Now we are prepared for that because according to Socrates's description, the charge arose from what the young followers of Socrates did. People got angry at them and said: Socrates corrupts the young. And then when they were asked: What is he doing? they didn't know what to say. They couldn't say: Because he has shown us up as pompous asses [laughter], so they said: Well, he investigates the things aloft, and so on. So this is well for that first [point]. The second point is [that] he connects the two items of the charge more closely than they are connected in the original, by omitting the one, "quote he commits an unjust act unquote" and the following "and." And thirdly, he emphasizes "new" by putting [it] at the end. I don't remember now how Fowler translated—well, "[64]not believing in the gods which the city believes, but in other daimonic things that are new." [LS taps on the table for emphasis] That's emphatic. This emphasis is not in the original.

To summarize these points: corruption of the young is the fundamental point, and there is only one crime, one criminal act: the corruption. How the impiety element comes in is not clear, but there is another very interesting change. Plato's Socrates omits the "introducing": "not believing in the gods which the city believes, but introducing other new daimonic things." That is very important for what happens soon afterwards.[65] By doing this, he in fact replaces "introducing" by "believing." Because[66] you need a verb here and though there is no new verb, you will make the first verb, the only verb, do double duty. So in other words, only through[67] Socrates's change does the accuser say: Socrates does not believe in the gods of the city but believes in other gods. The accuser himself was more cautious. He said: He introduces other gods. Introducing other gods is not the same as believing in them or worshipping them. The accuser does not necessarily say that Socrates respected, worshipped, believed in the existence of other gods. Now this is beautifully confirmed, I think, by Aristophanes's *Clouds*, where Socrates is presented indeed as introducing new gods—not believing in the gods, he says [that] Zeus does not even exist—introducing new gods, the Clouds. But then it becomes clear later on in the *Clouds* that he does not believe in the divinity of the Clouds; that is only a kind of pedagogic measure which he adopts in the case of the old silly man, Strepsiades—but not, for example, in the case of Strepsiades' clever son, Pheidippides. In the *Euthyphro*, 3b, Socrates says he is suspected of being a maker of gods, *poietes theon*, which is also not identical with believing in the gods.[68xxviii]

[xxvi] Diogenes Laërtius, "Socrates," in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 19.
[xxvii] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I.1.1.
[xxviii] *Euthyphro* 3b2.

Now why is this crucial change? If Meletus says: Socrates does not believe in the gods of the city, but he believes in other divinities that are new, and then Socrates asks him: Do you mean I don't believe in the gods of the city but I believe in other gods? Then Meletus says: No, you don't believe in any gods; you're an atheist. And then Socrates says: But look, you say in your indictment, as quoted by the Platonic Socrates, [69]"you believe in other daimonic things." And Socrates takes the simplest[70] understanding: daimonic things are not exactly gods but demons, i.e., children of one parent a god and the other parent a human being. Now just as one cannot believe in mules without believing in horses and donkeys, one cannot believe in demons without believing in gods. Good. That is[71] [the] big joke of this refutation. Well, we have to—we will take that up next time.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "To know—."

[2] Deleted "But then—surely that must be done."

[3] Deleted "did not—."

[4] Deleted "That."

[5] Deleted "let us."

[6] Deleted "while"

[7] Deleted "the traitors—."

[8] Deleted "I'm sorry."

[9] Deleted "saying."

[10] Deleted "a long—."

[11] Deleted "combining his examination—by."

[12] Deleted "And that."

[13] Deleted "is asked…he."

[14] Deleted "on the—the—the—they found it—."

[15] Deleted "They don't wish to…I mean, their—their boasting implies, their—their—."

[16] Deleted "since."

[17] Moved "one can rightly say."

[18] Deleted "on his—."

[19] Deleted "the first one."

[20] Deleted "Yeah, but I think that—yeah."

[21] Deleted "In a very—."

[22] Deleted "of the."

[23] Deleted "here's another art that…the—the money—money-making art that he—is connected in—in several—

LS: I beg your pardon?

[24] Deleted "see—."

[25] Deleted “who.”

[26] Deleted “he might wish—.”

[27] Deleted “In that, if, as we—.”

[28] Deleted “In the beginning we began by.”

[29] Deleted “LS: Yeah.”

[30] Deleted “But that isn’t very—.”

[31] Deleted “LS: But, yeah, alright.

[32] Deleted “of—that—.”

[33] Deleted “And he doesn’t—.”

[34] Deleted “if not—should—.”

[35] Deleted “They—I mean—.”

[36] Deleted “between—.”

[37] Deleted “is—.”

[38] Deleted “bad—.”

[39] Deleted “LS: 23b 6, yeah.

[40] Deleted “that wasn’t—.”

[41] Deleted “doesn’t make any…He.”

[42] Deleted “Yeah—no—this—I—I will give—.”

[43] Deleted “this.”

[44] Deleted “after that had opened.”

[45] Deleted “I mean, it—it would be interesting to say where are people—where—.”

[46] Deleted “what should not be—.”

[47] Deleted “Or—.”

[48] Deleted “LS: Pardon?

A: The Timaeus.”

[49] Deleted “is one—it.”

[50] Deleted “these orators here, these are not—.”

[51] Changed from “A rhetorician let us say, is a teacher of a.”

[52] Deleted “LS: Pardon?

A: The Apology.”

[53] Deleted “But.”

[54] Deleted “the—.”

[55] Deleted “But this simply reflects….”

[56] Deleted “there are some”

[57] Deleted “obviously.”

[58] Deleted “ya?”

[59] Deleted “all men.”

[60] Deleted “Number eleven.”

[61] Deleted “So, this is then….”

[62] Deleted “charge….”

[63] Deleted “which Socrates has made….”

[64] Deleted “‘believing in gods—.’”

[65] Deleted “In—.”

[66] Deleted “you—you need here a participle.”

[67] Deleted “Plato’s….”

[68] Deleted “This—so, we see—.”

[69] Deleted “‘that I do not….’”

[70] Deleted “in the—.”

[71] Deleted “that is a.”

Session 5: November 1, 1966

Leo Strauss: Now let us continue our discussion. Before Socrates defends himself against the formal indictment, he has told his judges three stories: first, the story of the first accusers; the story of Callias and Evenus; and third, the story of the Delphic oracle. The story of the first accusers surrounds the two other stories. These three stories were new to his audience. According to his emphatic claim, they were true stories. We have no means of proving or disproving that claim by independent external evidence, but there is some internal evidence which makes us doubt whether there were any first accusers different from the actual accusers. That was the point we reached last time. But be this as it may, the first accusers proved to be above all the political men and their admirers whom Socrates had debunked or, more precisely, the first accusers proved to be those Athenians who were debunked by Socrates's young companions. This being the case, the charge of corrupting the young arose naturally. All of us would regard someone who pokes fun at or makes other people poke fun at us as corrupters of the same. So the corruption charge is the immediate reaction, and since the corruption charge needs some support other than this dysfunctional truth, they fell back on the accusation of impiety. Now in accordance with this—the corruption charge first, the impiety charge afterward—Socrates changes the very wording of the indictment, as we have seen, by making the corruption charge precede the impiety charge. Now we have observed some other changes which Socrates makes in the indictment but we do not have to repeat that now.

Now we come to the next section.[1] First we have in 24c4 to 26b2 Socrates's refutation of Meletus's corruption charge, and later on then of course the refutation of Meletus's impiety charge. But first, regarding the first part, in 24c4 to 25a11, Socrates determines the precise meaning of the corruption charge, and he will act similarly in the case of the impiety charge. Now we begin then, Mr. Reinken, at 24c4. And will you read—

Mr. Reinken:

> But let us examine each point of this accusation.[2] He says I am a wrongdoer because I corrupt the youth. But I, men of Athens, think Meletus is a wrongdoer, because he jokes in earnest, lightly involving people in a lawsuit, pretending to be zealous and concerned about things for which he never cared at all. And that this is so I will try to make plain to you also.
>
> Come here, Meletus, tell me: don't you consider it of great importance that the youth be as good as possible? "I do." Come now, tell these gentlemen who makes them better? For it is evident that you know, since you care about it. For you have found the one who corrupts them, as you say, and you bring me before these gentlemen and accuse me; and now, come, tell who makes them better and inform them who he is. Do you see, Meletus, that you are silent and cannot tell? And yet does it not seem to you disgraceful and a sufficient proof of what I say, that you have never cared about it? (24c2-24c3)

LS: Let us stop here. There is a constant punning in the original on the name of Meletus and the Greek word for "caring" and so that, in other words, it is as if the man were "Mr. Carer," and you claimed to care for the youth. This is not very important. By the way, "wrongdoing," that is in Greek always here "acting unjust," "committing a crime." This one must keep in mind.[3] What Socrates says is very simple: if you know who corrupts the young, you must know who improves them. For if all men corrupt the young, corrupting the young is inevitable and therefore cannot be a crime. Meletus is obviously unprepared for this move of Socrates, and that is shown by his silence, which Socrates points out. Now let us go on and read the next point.

Mr. Reinken: "But tell, my good man, who makes them better? 'The laws.' [But] that is not what I ask, most excellent one, but what man, who knows in the first place just this very thing, the laws. 'These men—'" (24d10-24e4)

LS: Stop here. So Meletus gives, in a way, a good answer. The thing which makes the young good are the laws. No more respectable answer is thinkable, but Socrates is dissatisfied because, as he implies, the laws do not improve by themselves. They must be executed, observed, and preserved. For this purpose they must be known, known by human beings. The laws are not self-subsistent beings; this I say with a view to what we will read later in the *Crito*, where the laws are presented as self-subsisting beings addressing Socrates and preventing him from escaping from jail. So there must be human beings who know the laws. Socrates is silent about the fact that before the laws can be known—namely, known as laws—they must have been made laws. Therefore, this is quite a strange expression, "who knows the laws." The first who makes the laws. Now, why should Socrates be silent about that, that the laws have to be made? Well, there is a general rule that the laws are made, are dependent on the regime, on the political order—the power structure, I believe it would be called today. Good. Now in a democracy the regime is of course the demos; it is the predominant part of the society. And now what Socrates implies—in other passages he doesn't merely imply it: the river cannot rise higher than its source. So if the demos is the ultimate ground of the laws, then the laws are not likely to be truly improvers of the young. This critique of the laws is implied in this brief exchange here. But nevertheless the whole issue will come up soon,[4] since Socrates says: Who knows the laws? The answer will be, eventually, in a few steps: the demos knows the laws, and therefore the demos is the improver of the youth of Athens. Now will you go on, Mr. Reinken.

Mr. Reinken: Meletus answers: "'These men, Socrates, the judges.' What are you saying, Meletus? Are these gentlemen able to instruct the youth—" (24e4-24e5)

LS: You know, "gentlemen" is of course a preposterous thing here. "These ones"— "gentlemen" never occurs here. "These ones," those here, whom we see: Are they able[5] to educate the young? "And do they in fact make them better?" What a preposterous suggestion. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Certainly.' All, or some of them and others not? 'All.' Well said, by Hera, and this is a great plenty of helpers you speak of. But how—" (24e7-24e9)

LS: Let us stop here for one second. So now he swears here "by Hera," the wife of Zeus, and this is generally speaking a woman's oath, an oath made by women, and so Socrates presents himself

as a kind of woman. You remember his other irregular oath, "by the Dog," which we observed before [21e10]. Why does he here indicate his not being a man? Well, because the implication of the whole statement is that these people sitting around here,[6] a representative part of the demos, have one quality [in common]: they are all male, adult males. [LS taps on the table] They are men; therefore the indication is his oath "by Hera": all adult males, if they are Athenian citizens, are able to educate the young and in fact make them better. That is an assertion into which Meletus is maneuvered by Socrates. Yes, now?

Mr. Reinken: "But how about this? Do these listeners make them better, or not? 'These also.' And how—" (24e9-25a2)

LS: Who is among the listeners? Why does he speak of the listeners in particular? Yes?

Student: Well, Plato.

LS: Plato is one of them, yes [LS chuckles] and that would be very funny, if Socrates would be a corrupter and Plato an improver of the youth. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: Does the womanly oath signify, in other words, that Socrates is differentiating any function that he could have improving people from what everybody else does on—

LS: Yes, yes. Well, I mean, there is a joke as I understand it. It consists in this: a man lives out of the house, [in the] marketplace and, if he is truly a man, in the heat of battle and *doing* deeds; whereas the women are sitting at the house and talk[ing]. Now Socrates's peculiar activity is obviously more akin to that of women in this sense than that of men, although he did go—he was a warrior and so, but his heart was not in it, as you can see most simply from the beginning of the *Charmides*, where Socrates is asked, when he comes back from war, and he's asked about his war experience, and the way in which he pushes them aside, he's much more interested in what the youth of Athens are doing in Athens. Read just the first three lines of the *Charmides* and you'll see the point.[i]

Mr. Reinken: "And how about the senators? 'The senators also.' But, Meletus, those in the assembly, the assembly-men, don't corrupt the youth, do they? or do they also all make them better? 'They also.' All of the Athenians, then, as it seems, make them excellent, except myself—" (25a2-25a7)

LS: You know, here he could very well translate "gentlemen." "Make them gentlemen."

Mr. Reinken: "make them gentlemen,[ii] except myself, and I alone corrupt them. Is this what you mean? 'Very decisively, that is what I mean.'" (25a6-25a9)

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[i] *Charmides* 153a1-153a3.

[ii] In original: "make them excellent"

LS: Now let us stop here for a moment. He frequently says, by the way, not the young ones, but the *younger* ones, which I believe is an allusion to the fact that Meletus himself is rather young still. He is beyond the corruptible age because he is no longer unqualifiedly young, but only younger. Now all Athenians make the young ones into perfect gentlemen. By making this preposterous statement, Meletus goes much beyond Anytus in Plato's *Meno*, 92e3, who only says that every perfect gentleman among the Athenians is a teacher of virtue.[iii] This is a more reasonable statement than to say what[7] [Meletus] says here. Now again, let us not overlook the seriousness behind this crass joke. This is a democracy, and a democracy implies or expects men to believe that democracy is the best regime, because if it is not the best regime, why not transform it into the best regime? A subversive thought.[8] So this is the first premise. The second premise: but the best regime is best with a view to virtue; hence democracy should be best with a view to virtue. Now Socrates—to come back to the word here—Socrates is the sole corrupter in Athens. In other words, there is a radical opposition between Socrates and the city, i.e., the demos. This Socrates does in order to determine the precise meaning of Meletus's charge. Whether [Meletus][9] believed this before he replied to Socrates or not we can't say, but this is so to say his final position into which he has been brought by Socrates. And now we come to Socrates's refutation of the corruption charge as now more precisely defined. And now let us begin here where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:

> You have condemned me to great unhappiness! But answer me; does it seem to you to be so in the case of horses, that those who make them better are all mankind, and he who injures them some one person? Or, quite the opposite of this, that he who is able to make them better is some one person, or very few, the horse-trainers, whereas most people, if they have to do with and use horses, injure them? Is it not so, Meletus, both in the case of horses and in that of all other animals? Certainly it is, whether you and Anytus deny it or agree; for it would be a great state of blessedness in the case of the youth if one alone corrupts them, and the others do them good. But, Meletus, you show clearly enough that you have never thought about the youth, and you exhibit plainly your own carelessness, that you have not cared at all for the things about which you hale me into court. (25a9-25c5)

LS: You see again the recurrence of that punning. Now what Socrates says here is this: regarding all living beings, the corrupters are many and the improvers are few; but man is a living being, hence it stands to reason that there[10] will be many corrupters and few improvers. And that is the refutation of Meletus's preposterous assertion. Now let us read the end of this part.

Mr. Reinken:

> But besides, tell us, by Zeus,[iv] Meletus, is it better to live among good citizens, or bad? My friend, answer; for I am not asking anything hard. Do not the bad do some evil to those who are with them at any time and the good some good? "Certainly." Is there then

[iii] *Meno* 92e4-92e6.

[iv] In original: "for heaven's sake"

> anyone who prefers to be injured by his associates rather than benefited? Answer, my good man; for the law orders you to answer. Is there anyone who prefers to be injured? "Of course not." (25c5-25d4)

LS: Now to understand this part of the argument, take the case of horses or of dogs. Does anyone wish to make a dog vicious universally, meaning also to himself? That's of course absurd. And in this respect everyone has an interest in making the dog nice, and the horse too. And the same would apply to human beings, yes? That is developed in the *Euthyphron*, for example, but it is here implied.[v] Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> Come then, do you hale me in here on the ground that I am corrupting the youth and making them worse voluntarily or involuntarily? "Voluntarily I say" What then, Meletus? Are you at your age so much wiser than I at my age, that you have recognized that the evil always do some evil to those nearest them, and the good some good; whereas I have reached such a depth of ignorance that I do not even know this, that if I make anyone of my associates bad I am in danger of getting some harm from him, so that I do this great evil voluntarily, as you say? I don't believe this, Meletus, nor do I think anyone else in the world does! but either I do not corrupt them, or if I corrupt them, I do it involuntarily, so that you are lying in both events. But if I corrupt them involuntarily, for such involuntary errors the law is not to hale people into court, but to take them and instruct and admonish them in private. For it is clear that if I am told about it, I shall stop doing that which I do involuntarily. But you avoided associating with me and instructing me, and were unwilling to do so, but you hale me in here, where it is the law to hale in those who need punishment, not instruction.
>
> But enough of this, for, men of Athens, this is clear, as I said, that Meletus never cared much or little for these things. (25d4-26b2)

LS: Ya, let us stop here for a moment. So the argument is simple: no one wishes to be harmed, but to corrupt someone means to transform him into a harmful being, and hence in particular harmful to oneself. Hence no one corrupts anyone voluntarily, i.e., knowingly. And there may be involuntary corruption, but this cannot be a punishable offense. So Socrates has taken care of that.

Now Socrates proves in this way that there never was, and that there never will be, anyone who corrupts guiltily, voluntarily, but does not the same apply to all crimes? Because no one is so foolish as with open eyes to harm himself. So in raising this question Socrates questions all penal law, because all crimes would be reduced to involuntary action. There is a famous caricature of this thought[11] in Butler's *Erewhon*, which some of you will have read.[vi] And we don't have to go to Butler; there is much in present-day legal thought inclining in this direction, that all crime is due to circumstances wholly alien to the criminal. There is a long discussion of this subject from

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[v] *Euthyphro* 12e 10-13c 4.

[vi] Samuel Butler, *Erewhon: or, Over the Range*, chap. 11, "An Erewhonian Trial."

a point of view closer to legislation, in Plato's *Laws*, Book 9, 861d following, which you might read. At any rate, Socrates, in opposition the city as such, not only to the democracy, proves to be in opposition to the city because he questions the penal law and therewith, given the pivotal state of the penal law, the law as a whole. Now here we'll make a brief stop before we turn to the second part of Meletus's charge. Yes?

Student: Is it true that he questions any voluntary crime? Because in the refutation about corrupting the youth voluntarily, the crucial part is that he's corrupting people with whom he associates, but if he were corrupting people whom he were not to see again—

LS: Ya, well, apart from the fact that there are Socratic[12] utterances to this effect, that all wrongdoing is—even in the very *Apology*—involuntary, would this not be true also of other crimes? Well, assuming that there is an enforced penal code, is it not so that, let's say by murdering, stealing, cheating, and so on, you harm yourself?

Same student: Only if you get caught.

LS: Well, surely that makes it grave, but assuming that there is a relatively competent law-enforcing agency, the chances are very great. And some other complications; you never can tell whether they will not catch up with you at some [point]. Yes?

Student: Doesn't that also lead to a circular argument, though, because if you have a society in which you don't punish criminals because they are harming themselves, then it may become in their interest to be criminals, in which case they now are no longer doing it from ignorance.

LS: Yes, there are quite a few difficulties with Socrates's thesis, but still we have to consider here that this is part of a formal speech of defense by someone who has been accused of a capital crime. And by bringing in this assertion he gives some substance to simple-minded people, at least simple-minded hearers, that he is somewhat unreliable as a citizen altogether because he holds this view. I mean, because if even in present-day America some members of the Supreme Court are severely blamed for making law enforcement difficult[vii] (you know this kind of discussion), this would be all the more true of Socrates if there is no voluntary wrongdoing of any kind. Yes?

Student: To show that no one committed a crime, wouldn't he have to show that everyone was aware of this reasoning of his, that making other people worse will make them worse? I mean, if I don't know that, I may well commit a crime voluntarily.

[vii] Earl Warren served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1953 to 1969. During that time, several landmark cases ensured protection against unreasonable searches and seizures (e.g., *Mapp* v. *Ohio*, 367 U.S. 643 (1961)), and suspects' right to counsel (e.g., *Gideon* v. *Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963)). *Miranda* v. *Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966) required that police inform a suspect that he or she has the right to remain silent, the right to the advice and presence of a lawyer, and that a lawyer will be provided if the suspect is unable to afford one. Justices on the Court who concurred in these decisions included Associate Justices Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, and William J. Brennan, Jr.

LS: No, that is only when doubt of ignorance, [which][13] works only in it's own element. Only if you are ignorant of it are you perfectly innocent. If you know it in a way, you have already transcended this simple innocence of the criminal who has no doubt of his acting rightly, meaning rightly not in the sense of legally, but soundly, acting soundly. Good.

Now we turn to the second part of the refutation of Meletus's charge, the impiety charge. Socrates proceeds in the same way as before. First he determines the precise meaning of the charge, and then he refutes the charge. Now let us begin.

Mr. Reinken:

> But nevertheless, tell us, how do you say, Meletus, that I corrupt the youth? Or is it evident, according to the indictment you brought, that it is by teaching them not to believe in the gods the city[viii] believes in, but in other new demonic things[ix]? Do you not say that it is by teaching this that I corrupt them? "Very decidedly that is what I say." (26b2-26b9).

LS: Yes. Now in other words, Socrates corrupts the young exclusively by teaching them not to revere or believe in the gods revered or believed in by the city. In other words, Socrates is not guilty of any moral charge; corrupting the young could also imply that. Apparently Socrates has subordinated impiety to corruption by bringing in corruption as the first charge and impiety as the second. In fact he does just the opposite: the corruption consists entirely in his impiety or the spreading of his impiety.

Mr. Reinken: "Then, Meletus, for the sake of these very gods about whom our speech now is, speak still—" (26b9-26c1)

LS: That is a peculiar oath. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "speak still more clearly both to me and to these—" (26c1-26c2)

LS: No, here he says "these many."

Mr. Reinken:

> For I am unable to understand whether you say that I teach that there are some gods, and myself then believe that there are some gods, and am not altogether godless and am not a wrongdoer in that way, that these, however, are not the gods whom the city[x] believes in, but others, and this is what you accuse me for, that I believe in others; or you say that I do not myself believe in gods at all and that I teach this unbelief to other people. "That is what I say, that you do not believe in gods at all." (26c3-26c12)

[viii] In original: "state"
[ix] In original: "spiritual beings"
[x] In original: "state"

LS: Yes. Now if this is a trap, it is a very successful trap. Now Meletus means that Socrates is an unqualified atheist and the teacher of atheism. This is indeed, I think, the authentic meaning of the indictment as we know it from Diogenes Laërtius, where Socrates is bringing in, leading in, new divinities—not *nomizō*; not believing in, worshipping.[xi] I discussed that difference at the end of last meeting at some length. So this is now clear.[14] The meaning of the indictment has been restored against Socrates's corruption of the indictment by substituting believing, *nomizō*, for bringing in, leading in, *eisegoumenos*. So, yes?

Mr. Reinken: "You amaze me, Meletus! Why do you say this? Do I not even believe that the sun or yet the moon are gods, as the rest of mankind do?" (26c12-26d3)

LS: In other words, Socrates [says]: You, Meletus, say that Socrates is a monster. All men believe in the cosmic gods, as we can call them, the gods which everyone can see, whereas only the Greeks believe in the Greek gods, the Olympian gods. There is an interesting parallel to that in Aristophanes's comedy, the *Peace*, where some character says that the sun and the moon have been conspiring against all gods, meaning against all Olympian gods, to betray Greece to the barbarians, since the Greeks sacrifice to the gods whereas the barbarians sacrifice to the sun and the moon.[xii] So the belief in these visible gods, that is universal to the human race and therefore nothing to be proud of, because everyone does that; but the high thing is to worship the Olympian gods. Now there is an interesting parallel to that in Deuteronomy 4:19, which of course, without any such malicious intent, presents a striking parallel: "and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, shouldst thou be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven." In other words, the worship of the visible gods[15] has been assigned by the biblical God to all the nations except the chosen nation. That is strictly parallel to the suggestion we find in Aristophanes: the Olympian gods are worshipped by the Greeks, and the cosmic gods are a matter for all men except the chosen people, in this case the Greeks. It's a remarkable parallel. Now let us go on.

Mr. Reinken:

> "No, by Zeus, judges, since he says that the sun is a stone and the moon earth." Do you think you were accusing Anaxagoras, my dear Meletus, and do you so despise these gentlemen and think they are so unversed in letters as not to know, that the books of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian are full of such utterances? And forsooth the youth learn these doctrines from me, which they can buy sometimes (if the price is high) for a drachma in the orchestra and laugh at Socrates, if he pretends they are his own, especially when they are so absurd! But by Zeus,[xiii] do you think this of me, that I do not believe there is any god? "No, by Zeus, you don't, not in the least." (26d3-26e6)

[xi] Diogenes Laërtius, "Socrates," in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 19.
[xii] Aristophanes, *Peace* 406-413.
[xiii] In original: "for heaven's sake"

LS: You see here the great density of oaths, both of Socrates and Meletus, in this section. Now what do you think of this argument here up to this point? Socrates shows that a certain statement ascribed to him by Meletus is in fact the statement of somebody else, of Anaxagoras. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: He seems to be admitting not only that he doesn't believe in the sun and moon as gods but that the rest of them don't believe in them as gods either, because Anaxagoras—well, at least Anaxagoras being one of the rest of them, doesn't believe in them.

LS: I can't follow you. It is granted that Anaxagoras didn't believe in the divinity of the heavenly bodies.

Mr. Schaefer: Well, when he said that "I am unlike the rest of them" that implies all of them except me.

LS: That is Meletus's accusation, but Socrates—no, but Meletus accuses Socrates of holding this view and Socrates says: This is not my view, this is Anaxagoras's view. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: Well, it implies Socrates is at least conversant with the views of Anaxagoras and that he must have read them, and so then he has really studied science and—

LS: Ya,[16] that is quite true, but I think the more immediate thing, the fact that this view was set forth by Anaxagoras, does not yet prove that it cannot be shared by Socrates, obviously. Therefore it is not sufficient as a refutation. The refutation comes in the sequel. Now in other words, up to this point, Socrates has made clear the meaning of the charge: Socrates is an unqualified atheist. And from here on to the end of the Meletus section, we will find the refutation of the atheism or impiety charge. Now let us begin. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Is there any difference between *pros* and *ma*?

LS: [17]Sure, *pros* with the genitive, as you see, means literally "from someone toward."

Mr. Reinken: Yeah, and Socrates uses that *pros*.

LS: [18]I mean, if you start from this literal meaning of pros with the genitive that will mean: You who come toward me from Zeus; but[19] I have never found this as an accepted meaning, which doesn't mean that it may not be ultimately that. So in other words, not that you call Zeus as a witness, but that you ascribe to the man to whom you speak that he is coming, as it were, from Zeus. That would be according to the literal and primary meaning of *pros* with the genitive, but ordinarily it is taken as just equal, equivalent to *ma*. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "You cannot be believed, Meletus, not even, as it seems to me, by yourself. For this man appears to me, men of Athens, to be very violent and unrestrained, and—" (26e6-26e9)

LS: Not "violent,"[20]*hybristēs*: insolent pride, insolently proud. A mocker. This is more—ya, "incapable of self-control."

Mr. Reinken:

> insolent and uncontrolled,[xiv] and actually to have brought this indictment in a spirit of insolence and uncontrol[xv] and rashness. For he seems, as it were, by composing a puzzle to be making a test: "Will Socrates, the wise man, recognize that I am joking and contradicting myself, or shall I deceive him and the others who hear me?" For he appears to me to contradict himself in his speech, as if he were to say, "Socrates is a wrongdoer, because he does not believe in gods, but does believe in gods." And yet this is the conduct of a jester. (26e9-27a9)

LS: Ya. In other words, Meletus contradicts himself: that is Socrates's assertion, which he will prove. And Meletus knows that he contradicts himself. He is therefore a man who jokes, but since this is not a joking matter, accusing someone of a crime, he is a man lacking self-control. You know there are sometimes practical jokers who cannot resist temptations to engage in practical jokes which are, given [the] circumstances, criminal action. Something of this kind is happening here. Now if he is a man without self-restraint, who cannot overcome his urge to make practical jokes of this nature, then he is obviously in need of the ordinary remedy for that, and that in Greek [is] *akolastos*, namely, self-control. He needs *kolasis*, he needs punishment and not instruction, to use the Socratic alternative given in 26a7.[xvi] But could one not also say that Socrates is guilty of this kind of insolence, since he is responsible for that contradiction by his substituting in the charge "believing" for "bringing in." So that it would be then a kind of high-class comedy, where both the accuser and the defendant joke, play, with the gravest matters, that is, the life of one of them, at least, is at stake. One cannot completely suppress this reflection. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Join me, then, gentlemen, in examining how he appears to me to say this; and do you, Meletus, answer; and you, gentlemen, as I asked you in the beginning, please bear in mind not to make a disturbance if I conduct my argument in my accustomed manner." (27a9-27b5)

LS: Ya, this is one of the other cases where there is an explicit reference to an earlier remark, and here to 17c6 to 18a1, where Socrates excused his way of speaking by his lack of forensic experience, and where he does not refer to his dialogic procedure, i.e., to his refuting people by questioning them.[xvii] This confirms my general assertion that there is never an identical repetition. There is always some change, because naturally if it is an intelligent conversation—at least on one side an intelligent conversation—the situation will have changed ten minutes later, and it cannot be simply identical. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> Is there any human being who believes that there are things pertaining to human beings, but no human beings? Let him answer, gentlemen, and not make a

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[xiv] In original: "violent and unrestrained"
[xv] In original: "violence and unrestraint"
[xvi] Plato, *Apology* 26a -26a10.
[xvii] Plato, *Apology* 17c7-18a8.

> disturbance in one way or another. Is there anyone who does not believe in horses, but does believe in things pertaining to horses? or who does not believe that flute-players exist, but that things pertaining to flute-players do? There is not, best of men; if you do not wish to answer, I say it to you and these others here. But answer at least the next question. Is there anyone who believes demonic[xviii] things exist, but does not believe in— (27b3-27c3)

LS: Demons. Demons, ya. Demons.

Mr. Reinken: "in demons[xix]? 'There is not.'" (27c3)

LS: Now let us stop here for a moment. Now Socrates here prepares gradually the transition from the thought *nomizein theous* in Greek, which can mean "worshipping the gods," "respecting the gods," to *nomizein einai theous*, which means "believing that gods are." That is a point which you find, for example, also in Burnet's commentary: that the issue was in no way whether men believed in the existence of the gods, but only compliance or non-compliance with Athenian religious practices, the cult. [Burnet 1964, 184] Now it is clearly a question here according to Socrates of whether the gods are, because a cult cannot be sincere, from the heart, if the beings worshipped are not felt to be, to exist. Meletus grants here a bit too much. There may be things pertaining to demons, for example, sacrifices, without there being demons. People can worship non-existent beings. Or take another simple example: there may be things pertaining to witchcraft, say, broomsticks, without there being witches. There's no difficulty. This thought we can easily execute. So the example of horses is not surprising, because that came before; but why he now brings in flute-players I do not see.[21] That I do not quite follow, but it is not very important. Now let us go on.

Mr. Reinken:

> Thank you for replying reluctantly when forced by these gentlemen. Then you say that I believe in demonic things[xx], whether new or old, and teach that belief; but then I believe in demons at any rate, according to your statement, and you swore to that in your indictment. But if I believe in demons, it is quite inevitable that— (27c3-27c9)

LS: No, "if I hold demonic things to be."

Mr. Reinken: "hold demonic[xxi] things, it is quite inevitable that I believe also in demons; is it not so? It is; for I assume that you agree, since you do not answer. But—" (27c9-27d1)

LS: Let us stop here. One cannot hold in respect demonic things without holding in respect demons. I emphasize the fact that there is nothing here said in the original of being or existing. This comes out only in the sequel. Yes?

[xviii] In original: "spiritual"
[xix] In original: "spirits"
[xx] In original: "spiritual beings," as is the case in the two other occurrences of "demons" in this passage.
[xxi] In original: "spirits," as is the case in the second occurrence of "demons" in this passage.

Mr. Reinken:

> But do we not think the demons[xxii] are gods or children of gods? Yes, or no? "Certainly." Then if I believe in demons, as you say, if demons are a kind of gods, that would be the puzzle and joke which I say you are uttering in saying that I, while I do not believe in gods, do believe in gods again, since I believe in demons; but if, on the other hand, demons are a kind of bastard children of gods, by nymphs or by any others, whoever their mothers are said to be, what man would believe that there are children of gods, but no gods? It would be just as absurd as if one were to believe that there are children of horses and asses, namely mules, but no horses and asses. But, Meletus, you certainly must have brought this suit either to make a test of us or because you were at a loss as to what true wrongdoing you could accuse me of; but there is no way for you to persuade any man who has even a little sense that it is possible for the same person to believe in— (27d1-27e8)

LS: Demonic—

Mr. Reinken: "demonic things[xxiii] and again for the same person not to believe in demons[xxiv] or gods or heroes." (27e8-28a1)

LS: Yes. That's the end of it. So in other words, [22]according to the indictment as edited by Socrates, Socrates believes in demonic things; but it is as impossible to believe in demonic things without believing in demons as it is to believe in horsic things without believing in horses. Now, so good: Socrates believes then in demons. And here it is clear: either demons are gods, which is perfectly possible according to Greek usage, or if you do go on to make a distinction, demons being lesser, lower, in dignity than the gods, then they will be children of gods, and preferably children who have one divine parent and one human parent. Now, and even in the latter case, least favorable, I still admit the existence of gods because one parent will be a god, just as I could never[23] recognize that there are mules without recognizing horses, the more noble of their parents, the same would be true. That is the whole argument, but it is based chiefly[24] on the substitution of *nomizō*, believing in, for *eisegoumenos*, leading in. And it is quite interesting here that in this final section, the word *nomizei*, which has this meaning of "believing in," never occurs. Socrates[25] uses only another Greek term which, in common usage—I will write it down [LS writes on the blackboard]: *hegeisthai*, not *nomizō*. But[26] the primary meaning of *hegeisthai* is "leading," i.e., the root of that word "leading in," *eisegeisthai*,[27] which rabbit Socrates had made disappear in his big hat. The end of this passage which Mr. Reinken read seems to mean that the belief in the gods or in the popular gods is inseparable from the belief in half-gods. Read again the last line, Mr. Reinken.

[xxii] In original: "spirits," as is the case in the three other occurrences of "demons" in the passage.
[xxiii] In original: "spiritual and divine existences"
[xxiv] In original: "spirits"

Mr. Reinken: "no way for you to persuade me[xxv] any man who had even a little sense that it is possible for the same person to believe in demonic things[xxvi] and again for the same person not to believe in demons[xxvii] or gods or heroes." (27e6-28a1)

LS: Ya, does this not imply that[28] one and the same man would not believe in demons, gods, and heroes, i.e., if you believe in one of these (say, in gods) you believe automatically in demons and heroes because the source of the belief is the same, say, Homer, and both things are equally supported by the Homeric doctrine. Now this is then in a way the most important part of the *Apology* because it is a formal refutation of the charge. It obviously does not prove that Socrates was not an atheist, because it was strictly argued on the basis of the accuser's premise, and only showed that he contradicts himself. That doesn't settle the issue in any way. Before we—is there any point you would like to bring up at this point before we turn to the sequel? Yes?

Student: Is not the introduction of heroes something that hasn't been mentioned before?

LS: Yes, that is true. I think that was never mentioned before, but it will be taken up very soon again, and therefore it is part of the transition to the sequel.

So hitherto it was to[29] quite [an] amazing degree [that] the plan of the *Apology* was perfectly lucid. Generally speaking, bipartitions following the precedent of the accusation. But from now on the plan becomes very obscure. Only one thing one can say safely: that the sequel, that is to say, roughly until the end of this speech in 35, has the same relation to the refutation of Meletus as the long account of the Delphic oracle and its consequence has to the refutation of the first accusers. That is to say, let us see [LS writes on the blackboard]: first accusers to Delphic oracle—by Delphic oracle I mean the whole story of the Delphic oracle, what Socrates did on the basis of it and so on; equal to Meletus (refutation of Meletus) to X—by X, I mean the section beginning now.

This is clear, necessarily so, because Socrates has proven that Meletus' charge is altogether baseless. And then naturally the question would arise: But if the charge is altogether baseless, how come [30]you are accused of this thing? There must be something strange about you, Socrates, that you of all people become the sole target, the sole Athenian target of this charge. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Do you want me to go on?

LS: [31]We have not yet—we have first to read the end, where you left off, ya.

Mr. Reinken:

> Well then, men of Athens, that I am not a wrongdoer according to Meletus's indictment, seems to me not to need much of a defence, but what has been said is enough. But you may be assured that what I said before is true, that great hatred has arisen against me and

[xxv] "me" does not appear in the original
[xxvi] In original: "spiritual and divine existences"
[xxvii] In original: "spirits"

> in the minds of many persons. And this it is which will cause my condemnation, if it is to cause it, not Meletus or Anytus, but the slander[xxviii] and dislike of the many. (28a 1-28a 9).

LS: *Phthonos*, the last word, can also be more specific than "dislike," "envy." It doesn't have to be but it can, ya?

Mr. Reinken: "This has condemned many other good men, and I think will do so; and there is no danger that it will stop with me." (28a9-28b1)

LS: Let us stop here. Now this is the conclusion of the defense against Meletus and the transition to the next section. If Socrates will be condemned, it will be the work not of Meletus and Anytus—these worms, as it were—but of the many who slandered him out of envy. Envy for what? Presumably for his wisdom. He refers here back to 23a1 following, where he had not spoken of envy.[xxix] Here, there is no longer any connection with the first accusers. We know already by now what to think about that; I will not repeat it, out of delicacy. Good.

And now we come then to the last part of the defense, which begins at this point. Burnet gives it the title "the divine mission of Socrates."[xxx] This is a possible title, but we must see whether this is sufficient. And I stated the general relation, function of this section now beginning before by this proportion I drew on the blackboard. Now let us read first the beginning of the passage. Because it has no heading, as all other sections have hitherto had, and therefore we must wait for the development of the thought. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "But perhaps someone might say: 'Are you then not ashamed, Socrates, of having followed such a pursuit, that you are now in danger of being put to death as a result?' But I should make to him a just reply—" (28b2-28b6)

LS: Ya, "I should as a reply to him him give this just speech," or "just logos." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> "You do not speak well, Sir, if you think a man in whom there is even a little merit ought to consider danger of life or death, and not rather regard this only, when he does things, whether the things he does are right or wrong and the acts of a good or a bad man. For according to your argument all the demigods would be bad who died at Troy, including the son of Thetis, who so despised danger, in comparison with enduring any disgrace, that when his mother (and she was a goddess) said to him, as he was eager to slay Hector, something like this, I believe, 'My son, if you avenge the death of your friend Patroclus and kill Hector, you yourself shall die; "for straightway,"' she says, '"after Hector, is death

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[xxviii] In original: "prejudice"
[xxix] *Apology* 22e7-23a3.
[xxx] *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito*, ed. John Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 197.

> appointed onto thee"'; he, when he heard this, made light of death and danger, and feared much more to live as a coward and not to avenge his friends, and 'Straightway,' said he, 'may I die, after doing vengeance upon the wrongdoer, that I may not stay here, jeered at beside the curved ships, a burden of the earth.' Do you think he considered death and danger?" (28b6-28d6).

LS: Yes. That is very strange. Why does this come up here? The obvious reason is this: "someone, *tis*, might say that it is disgraceful to engage in a pursuit through which one runs the risk to die." This is an *adikos logos*, an unjust speech, to which Socrates opposes his just speech. The unjust speech is made by a man whom Socrates addresses, *anthrope*, "you human being"—that is, not a real man. I occasionally translated it by "Mack" [laughter], which is very vulgar but gives perhaps some notion. Now Socrates, on the other hand, is a man, *aner*, even a good man, *aner agathos*, a good *hombre*. If the unjust speech were right, the half-gods who died before Troy would be low-class people, and this [is] of course impossible. Socrates thus underlines his belief in beings descended on one side from a god and another from a human being, as you see. If you have any doubt that he believed that Achilles was the son of a human being, Peleus, and a goddess, Thetis, the doubt is removed by this quotation. He singles out here especially Achilles, who preferred the noble thing, revenge on Hector, although he knew that this was bound to lead to his death and he prefers this revenge on Hector to living. The passage confirms Socrates's belief in half-gods, but apart from that the reference to Achilles doesn't seem to be very apt. Socrates was not bent on avenging a friend's death, after all. We know nothing to this effect. And most visibly, he, in contradistinction to the young Achilles, is very old. So why does he just choose Achilles as his mythical parallel? Let us have a cursory glance at the *Iliad*, Book 18, this passage. Well, I will read to you in the English prose translation, what this . . . .

> Then answered unto him [Achilles] Thetis [his mother] shedding tears: "Short-lived, I ween, must thou be, then, my child, by what thou sayest, for straightway after Hector is death appointed unto thee."
> Then mightily moved spake unto her Achilles fleet of foot: "Straightway may I die, since I might not succour my comrade at his slaying. Here fallen afar from his country and lacked my help in his sore need. Now therefore, since I go not back to my dear native land, neither have at all been succour to Patroklos nor to all my other comrades that have been slain by noble Hector, but I sit beside my ships a profitless burden of the earth, I that in war am such an one as is none else of the mail-clad Achaians, though in council are others better—may strife perish utterly among gods and men, and wrath that stirreth even a wise man to be vexed, wrath that far sweeter than trickling honey waxeth like smoke in the breasts of men, even as I was wroth even now against Agamemnon king of men.[xxxi]

Now these verses, in which Achilles sees the truth about strife and anger, are of course omitted by Socrates. They would somehow fit in as Socrates improves the text of Homer by speaking of Socrates's doing right to the wrong-doing Hector. This reference to justice is of course entirely

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[xxxi] Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1883), 369.

absent from the *Iliad*. Good. So this *logos* here, when you compare it with the functionally-parallel passage, what Socrates says after having refuted the first accusers, 20c4, that's a parallel to 28b3. If you have that, do you see what Socrates says there? "Someone[32] of you might perhaps take up the matter." And here he says, "perhaps some *one*," meaning the objection raised in 20a to c following was made by one of you, one of the many decent Athenians. The objection made now by this Mack is below the level of the ordinary decent Athenian. And[33] that I think is quite helpful for understanding the step which is now very slowly and gradually prepared. Yes?

Student: Would you repeat those passages again, please?

LS: 28b3: compare that with 20c4, you know these parallel passage here [at] the beginning. Both begin with an objection which a man could make. But in the first case the objector is an ordinary Athenian, "one of you." In the second case, he is not an ordinary decent Athenian but a very low-class fellow who doesn't know that there are things more respectable than mere living. Good. Yes, and now let us go on here.

Mr. Reinken:

> For thus it is, men of Athens, in truth; wherever a man stations himself, thinking it is best to be there, or is stationed by his commander, there he must, as it seems to me, remain and run his risks, considering neither death nor any other thing more than disgrace.
>
> So I should have done a terrible thing, if, when the commanders whom you choose to command me stationed me, both at Potidaea and Amphipolis[xxxii] and at Delium, I remained where they stationed me, like anybody else, and ran the risk of death, but when the god— (28d6-28e5).

LS: Let us stop here. Now Socrates makes now quite clear that his just speech, namely, [that] death is a lower consideration than disgrace, is a speech accepted by the Athenians. As he puts it here, he took his position in the ranks and didn't run away "like anybody else." So this is what every Athenian of normal decency would do. And this makes it all the more necessary to raise the question: If this principle—disgrace is worse than death—is generally accepted in Athens, [then] why does Socrates introduce such a subnormal *anthrōpos*, mere human being, with precisely this assertion that death is worse than disgrace? Did I make clear the difficulty? Your expressions speak against this hopeful assumption. Pardon?

Student: I didn't understand it.

LS: [34]Here begins a new section, the meaning of which is not clear except in a very general way, that it must be an explanation of Socrates's becoming the target of persecution, ya? He has proven that he is utterly innocent. Why then [did he become the] suspect of crime?[35] This question must be answered again, but otherwise we do not know what he is doing here. And he begins it with bringing in the unjust speech of a low-class, nameless fellow. Why does he do

[xxxii] In original: "at Amphipolis"

that? I mean, a man who holds the view which none of his judges holds. Socrates is in perfect agreement with his judges regarding this principle: disgrace is worse than death. Why does he bring in such a criminal point of view?[36]

Mr. Shulsky: Well, but in addition to being a very dishonorable point of view, that would also be the point of view held by some of the nobility, for instance, Callicles in the *Gorgias* states that, you should be ashamed of yourself, Socrates, for doing, you know, for disregarding important business that could save your life and spending your time doing things that leave you open to persecution.[xxxiii]

LS: [37]I mean, what the gentlemanly point of view is not as clear as I presented it.

Mr. Shulsky: I would—

LS: There is a certain ambiguity. Perhaps you are right. But we—up to this point we have only this: here a criticism of Socrates made by a low-class fellow, and followed by the assertion that everyone—Socrates, like every other Athenian—acted on the opposite principle, ya? So we must wait, then.

Student: Is it a point, though, that if somebody says to him: Why are you getting yourself into trouble? they are implicitly assuming that what he's doing is not important and [that he is] not obeying somebody [else's] orders. And that by saying: Well, look, you're really doing the same thing as telling a soldier to run away from his post, he is therefore emphasizing the fact that doing his duty is analogous to a soldier's duty and that their objection is a trivial one.

LS: You spoke so quickly, that—

Same student: He—someone might in fact say to him: Why are you getting yourself into trouble? And if he merely said: Well, it's my duty, this might be oratorically less effective than if he said: Well, look, you're in the same position as some ignorant lout who tells a soldier that he should run away from his position instead of obeying—

LS: Yes, but still, why does he make it so clear, as he does to one reading it with ordinary care, that this criticism is that of a lout, made by a lout? And the ordinary, average member of the jury does not share this point. Socrates seems to try to appeal to the ground common [between him and][38] his judges. So I think that is true, but what he does next and immediately is to make clear what the difference between him and his judges is. The principle is the same: one must obey one's superiors regardless of danger of death. And now the question is only: Who are superiors par excellence? Are these the elected commanders, the commanders elected by the demos of Athens, or some higher beings? That is the transition. And this will become immediately clear from the sequel. Will you read on?

Mr. Reinken:

[xxxiii] *Gorgias* 521c4-521c8.

> but when the god gave me a station, as I believed and understood, with orders to spend my life in philosophy and in examining myself and others, then I were to desert my post through fear of death or anything else whatsoever. It would be a terrible thing, and truly one might then justly hale me into court, on the charge that I do not believe that there are gods, since I disobey the oracle and fear death and think I am wise when I am not. (28e5-29a6)

LS: Now let us stop here for a moment. Now Socrates returns to what distinguishes him from the Athenians after having emphasized what connects him with them. The unjust speech of that lout is beneath the Athenians. Socrates's case is above the Athenians. Now what distinguishes Socrates from all the other Athenians is that he obeys directly a superior much higher than any superior elected by the Athenians, namely, he obeys the god. We know the story of the Delphic oracle. And the god has commanded him, moreover—now something which didn't appear so clearly before—has commanded him to philosophize. What philosophizing means is in no way explained here. It can have the very crude, vulgar meaning where it means to strive for what is now called culture, you know,[39] being interested in music, and in sculptures, and this kind of thing. And it can also have the gravest and severest meaning: dedicating oneself to the understanding of the fundamentals of the universe, the whole. This is not explained. The use of the word is of course of importance. And now he goes on and he says [that] if he had not lived as he in fact did, he would be rightly accused of atheism on three grounds—three grounds, the three grounds being disobeying the oracle (because a man who believes in the gods will obey the oracle), fearing death (is a proof of atheism), and believing to be wise while one is not wise. Yes?

Student: Now, the oracle just said that he was the wisest man; it didn't really tell him to go and find out.

LS: Ya, but in human wisdom. What do you mean by that?

Same student: Well, if you say that Socrates's life was only to obey the god, to philosophize, actually from his previous statement about the oracle in Delphi, it looks like the oracle said only that he was the wisest man—and it didn't give him an order, in other words.

LS: Ya, but to what extent is this an objection to what I just said?

Same student: Well, you say that Socrates is demonstrating that he is obeying the god.

LS: That he is demonstrating that he's obeying the god?

Student: . . . .

LS: I don't think I said that. I'm trying—there is a certain difficulty here because he introduces another word: philosophizing. What does that mean? That's in no way clear. We'll come back to that question later on. The second point which I made is this, that Socrates, if he did not obey the god, then could one justly accuse him of not believing in the existence of the gods because he

does three things: first, he would disobey the oracle, the oracle allegedly commanding him to philosophize; secondly, because he fears death; and thirdly, because he believes to be wise without being wise. These three facts, three things would be signs of atheism. That is the question. And we must consider here that we had formerly three other signs of atheism mentioned. Do you remember which they were? They are not only replaced—pardon?

Student: You mean what he's accused of studying.

LS: Yes. Now, enumerate them.

Same student: What is below or beneath the earth, what is in the air or in the heavens, and—

LS: Making the weaker *logos* the stronger one. Yes. So then in other words, Socrates reminds us here of the three popular signs of atheism: investigating the things aloft; investigating the things beneath the earth; and making the weaker logos the stronger one. And he substituted now three signs which seem to be more reliable than the first three ones, and they are the ones he mentions here. Now what's your . . . .

Student: Surely two of those things contradict what he had explicitly told us the oracle actually said, that is to say, he explicitly says that the oracle never told him to do anything at all; he deduced the oracle as telling him something.[xxxiv] Therefore, what he is really obeying is his own deduction about what the god intended.

LS: Yes, but this is a point: you see, the oracle is as a matter of course enigmatic. And Apollo may very well give a commission, impose a task on a man by making an unintelligible factual statement, ya? Is it not possible?

Same student: No, I wanted to go on: that in a sense he is believing himself to be wise by believing that he knows what the oracle means. And second, that—

LS: No, but that he found out the hard way. I mean, there is nothing immodest in that.

Same student: And second, that on the direct reading of the oracle, believing himself to be wise would be a religious thing to do, because after all the oracle told him that he was the wisest man in the world.

LS: Ya, but[40] this is already a change, because no one—what the god literally said, or the Pythia literally said, is: No one is wiser than Socrates, which goes together with a great deal of folly—can go together with a great deal of folly. No, but there is some misunderstanding which I cannot remove because I don't see it clearly enough. The point which I made, I repeat it, is this: Socrates speaks here of three signs of atheism: disobeying an oracle; fearing death; and believing to be wise while one is not wise. And this contrasts strongly with the three popular signs of atheism: investigating the things aloft; investigating the things beneath the earth; and making the

[xxxiv] Here Strauss asks the student to repeat his point, which the student does.

weaker logos the stronger one. This I believe one cannot deny. Now the interesting thing, the question is: Why does Socrates make this substitution? Well, it is clear. Socrates does not believe that the three popular signs are good, are clear symptoms of the disease in question, whereas *these* three ones are clear symptoms. The second point is: Why does he assign "fearing death" the central position? And that will become clear in the sequel. The easiest thing to understand is that disobeying a divine command is a sign of atheism. It's plausible, by no means necessary. Jonah, in the Book of Jonah, was not an atheist and yet tried to disobey God, as you know, because he found it very unsavory to do the kind of things with which he was commissioned. But let us leave it at the somewhat simple Socratic version of this thought. Now go on, Mr. Reinken.

Mr. Reinken:

> For to fear death, gentlemen, is nothing else than to think one is wise when one is not; for it is thinking one knows what one does not know. For no one knows whether death be not even the greatest of all blessings to man, but they fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils. And is not this the most reprehensible form of ignorance, that of thinking one knows what one does not know? Perhaps, gentlemen, in this matter also I differ from other men in this way, and if I were to say that I am wiser in anything, it would be in this, that not knowing very much about the other world, I do not think I know. (29a6-29b7)

LS: "The things in Hades," is the literal translation, which is preferable on every ground.

Mr. Reinken:

> the things below, the things in Hades,[xxxv] I do not think I know. But I do know that it is evil and disgraceful to do wrong and to disobey him who is better than I better than I, whether he be god or man. So I shall never fear or avoid those things concerning which I do not know whether they are good or bad rather than those which I know are bad. (29b6-29b12)

LS: Now let us stop here. Now you see Socrates had given three signs of atheism. The first was self-explanatory. The only question concerned the second and third: fearing death and believing to be wiser than one is. Now Socrates reduces number three to number two. Fearing death is pretending to know the things which one does not know properly, the things in Hades, as Mr. Reinken saw immediately—the things beneath the earth has this double meaning, that is, not only the oil and the coal, but also things in Hades. Of course there is another possibility; granting if you do not know sufficiently the things in Hades, there is an alternative to fearing them and not fearing them, namely, to suspend one's judgment, which is the wise thing to do whenever we do not have sufficient knowledge: suspend one's judgment as to whether life in Hades is good or bad; we know too little about it. But still, precisely because one does not know, one has ground for apprehension. After all, the terrible stories might be true. I cannot refute them, and then I would at least—I would perhaps not be as apprehensive as someone who is sure that these frightful stories are true, but that's a question. The very uncertainty can increase the

[xxxv] Mr. Reinken inserts Strauss's translation of the phrase.

apprehension. Read Pascal's famous Wager on this subject.[xxxvi] Now here we see already a bit more of the connection of these thoughts. Shortly before, at the beginning of this part of his speech he had referred to Achilles, without mentioning his name. What did Achilles say of Hades when he was already in it and knew it perfectly? Do you remember?

Mr. Reinken: It was miserable. He'd rather—

LS: Yes. Well, and Plato himself quotes it in the *Republic*, 386c. He says it is better to be a living serf of a poor man on the earth than to be the ruler over all the dead in Hades.[xxxvii] So Achilles is the greatest witness speaking[41] for the lout's view, for the unjust speech. We must add immediately that this terribly disgraceful speech becomes known to us only through Odysseus, who reports of this conversation with Achilles, and Odysseus was a notorious liar. [Laughter] So we can very well, for the greater glory of Achilles, dismiss it. But to repeat, Achilles himself seems to agree with the unjust speech of Mack, with which he does his part. That doesn't clarify the situation sufficiently, but it is a stone, one of the few stones which we need in order to build up the structure. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And therefore, even if you acquit me now and are not convinced by Anytus, who said that either I ought not to have been brought to trial at all, or since I was—" (29b12-29c3)

LS: "In the first place," ya?

Mr. Reinken:

> in the first place, or since I was brought to trial, I must certainly be put to death, adding that if I were acquitted your sons would all be utterly ruined by practicing what I teach—if you should say to me in reply to this: "Socrates, this time we will not do as Anytus says, but we will let you go, on this condition, however, that you no longer spend your time in this investigation or in philosophy, and if—" (29c3-29c10)

LS: I would translate "nor in philosophizing" in the sequel.[42] Socrates does something in addition to philosophizing. We do not yet know what it is. Nor do we know, for that matter, what philosophizing is and that's probably the reason why we do not know what this other ingredient is. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> "nor in philosophizing,[xxxviii] and if you are caught doing so again you shall die"; if you should let me go on this condition which I have mentioned, I should say to you, "Men of Athens, I respect and love you, but I shall obey the god rather than you, and while I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up philosophy nor[xxxix] stop— " (29c10-29d5)

[xxxvi] Blaise Pascal, "Note 233," in *Pensées*.
[xxxvii] *Republic* 386c5-386c7. Here Plato quotes Achilles, from Homer, *Odyssey* XI: 489-491.
[xxxviii] In original: "or in philosophy"
[xxxix] In original: "or"

LS: Ya. Well, "I shall never cease philosophizing." This is an adaptation from a verse of Euripides, in his *Heracles*, where the chorus says "I shall never cease worshipping the Muses," and where the general view is that this is of course Euripides speaking now through the chorus, because the chorus were simpleminded people who were not likely to worship the Muses.[xl] Be that as it may.

Now let us stop here and see what this means. Socrates would obey the god rather than the Athenians. That's elementary,[43] but now we come to the interesting consequence which not everyone would have drawn: therefore he would disobey an Athenian law forbidding philosophizing. That's important, because what he speaks about here, without using the word "law"—he speaks in fact of a legal prohibition against philosophizing. Now whether there was at that time a law in force which by implication forbade philosophizing, that is impossible to say, because it depends on whether philosophizing is thought to be compatible with believing in the existence of the gods worshipped by the city. According to a very common view, as we have seen from the *Apology*, philosophizing was thought to be incompatible with believing in the existence of the gods of the city, and therefore by implication philosophy was a capital crime, the capital crime of impiety. Another point which we must keep in mind also with a view to the *Crito*, where Socrates seems to speak in favor of unqualified obedience to the law,[xli] Socrates is not unqualifiedly in favor of obeying the laws because such a law, like the one forbidding philosophizing under any circumstances, he would not obey under any circumstances.

Now this whole question—I think we must stop here.[44] Here we are at a crucial point and I would like to make only this remark. This relation not only of this Athenian democracy in a state of great nervousness in the year 399 but the polis altogether had a complicated relationship to philosophy. And the simplest proof of this is the fact that when Plato builds up the best possible regime in the *Republic*, this best possible regime is possible only if it is based on the noble lie. And one can argue as follows: if even the best regime requires a lie as its foundation, all the more so the imperfect regimes. And these two lies, noble lies of the *Republic* are very simply these two: first (you have to read the passage in 414; I can give you only the crude results), the transformation of the earth into the land, which means the practically important conclusion that not all human beings, children of the earth, but only the children of the soil, of the fatherland, are brothers.[xlii] This is the first massive point: the absolutization, as we can say with a barbaric expression, of the individual state. And the second point is what we can call the sanctification of the established regime: declaring it to be beyond any reasonable doubt, beyond any rational criticism.

Now these two crucial limitations, incompatible with philosophy, are of the essence of the city. Therefore there is a disproportion, which can lead at all times—happily, very rarely—to actual conflict between the philosophizing man and the city. And from here we understand the beginnings of modernity in the simplest manner, that what happened since the seventeenth century, the sixteenth century is the emergence of the view that a society in perfect harmony with

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[xl] Euripides *Heracles* 673-686.
[xli] *Crito* 51c7-52a5.
[xlii] *Republic* 414d1-414e5.

philosophy, in essential harmony with philosophy is possible, namely, by two things: if the whole citizen body is enlightened by philosophy, it will no longer resent philosophy. So enlightenment is the crucial thing. The second point: the end of the philosopher, according to Socrates, radically differs from the end of the non-philosopher. We will find a very strong statement to this effect in the *Crito*.[xliii] The end of the philosopher, we may say (using now a non-Socratic term), is understanding, contemplation as such. And the end of the non-philosophers is all kinds of things noble or less noble, but surely not contemplation. And now what comes to the fore in the seventeenth century is the view that the ends of the philosophers and the ends of the non-philosophers can be identified insofar as the philosopher will use his philosophizing for furthering the ends of the non-philosophers. In simple terms: knowledge, science for the sake of power—of power, meaning the power of improving the lot of men by these two steps, which we can indicate by the abbreviations enlightenment and technology. The harmony between philosophy and society, as we now say, was achieved to such an extent that especially in the more favored countries, like the United States (but to some extent even in such countries like Germany), it is no longer intelligible that there ever was a fundamental conflict between philosophy and the polis.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "and there is first…."

[2] Deleted "'Our last words.'"

[3] Deleted "if—."

[4] Deleted "because…."

[5] Deleted "to—able to judge the young…."

[6] Deleted "these…part of—."

[7] Deleted "Meno."

[8] Deleted "But, the—."

[9] Deleted "Meno."

[10] Deleted "should be few—."

[11] Deleted "in Erewhon—."

[12] Deleted "ignorances to that—I'm sorry, I mean."

[13] Deleted "is—on the—this ignorance."

[14] Deleted "Socrates…This now means—."

[15] Deleted "is—."

[16] Deleted "that is one—that we have already."

[17] Deleted "Yeah, There is one. Ma come down…."

[18] Deleted "No, it—well."

[xliii] *Crito* 48a3-48b2.

[19] Deleted “I don’t think that this is—you—.”

[20] Deleted “I would not.”

[21] Deleted “Perhaps—I mean, that—.”

[22] Deleted “Socrates has—believes.”

[23] Deleted “say that a mule….”

[24] Deleted “on the fact—on the—.”

[25] Deleted “speaks only of—of another Greek—.”

[26] Deleted “*hegeisthai* means….”

[27] Deleted “which Socrates had….”

[28] Deleted “if you have to—that the same man who would….”

[29] Deleted “a.”

[30] Deleted “that”

[31] Deleted “Yeah, unless there is any….”

[32] Deleted “might take up—someone.”

[33] Deleted “that I think we must—that must say—.”

[34] Deleted “Yeah, why—I mean, the question—.”

[35] Changed from “Why then became he the suspect of the crime?”

[36] Deleted “Lady, did you now…I don’t—forgot your name. Did you now—no, this lady—did you now understand?

A: Yes.

LS: Good, so at least this one. Yes?”

[37] Deleted “So in other words, the point of view….”

[38] Deleted “to him with”

[39] Deleted “going to—be.”

[40] Deleted “that is not exactly—.”

[41] Deleted “in—.”

[42] Deleted “Philosophizing is not—.”

[43] Deleted “He would—and therefore—.”

[44] Deleted “This whole question….”

Session 6: November 3, 1966

Leo Strauss: Now we have read again [a] rather lengthy section of the *Apology* and therefore we must try to have some discussion today if this is regarded as useful or desirable. Now I begin again with a general observation. Studying a work of Plato means undergoing a training in thinking, in philosophizing. In other words, it is not an attempt to get information;[1] there are other books for this purpose. Now philosophy here means the quest for knowledge of the whole: all things, not less. But to know the whole means to know all its parts; hence the whole process of philosophizing consists in a movement back and forth between the whole and the parts, considering every detail, linking it up with the whole, and then descending from the whole to the detail in question. Understanding the detail in the light of the whole. This is what we are trying to do when reading the *Apology*, and in this we train ourselves for the study, if one may say so, of worthier subjects: not merely the thought of Plato, but the truth. Now this—if one can call that with an improper word the epistemology of Plato—this is nothing peculiar to Plato, but that is what we do all the time. I take a very obvious subject in a political science class, say, state politics as a subject. Everyone who studies, even[2] precisely the originator of this field, starts of course from the whole, state politics, meaning from some awareness of the whole. Even if one seemingly begins with one special detail, state politics, Republican state politics in the state of Illinois [in] 1966, in November; if one would not start from the whole, one could not select the detail in question as belonging to "quote state politics unquote." I mean in this very simple commonsensical sense [in which] must it be understood first, what the Platonic procedure is.

Now at the end of our last meeting, I referred to what one can call the quarrel, *the* quarrel within political philosophy. The problems are in a manner the same in all times—for example, here the possible injustice of laws. But the contexts in which they appear differ in different epochs. And this difference is as important as the agreements. Now no change is as fundamental as that which separates modern political philosophy from classical political philosophy. This difference is indeed not visible at every point and not to every eye, but reduced to the most simple formula the difference is this: classical political philosophy denies, whereas modern political philosophy asserts, the possibility of a rational society or of an unqualifiedly just society to be established and preserved by men's own powers alone. The doctrine which today is sometimes called in, I think, introductory lectures to politics[3] the classical theory of democracy, which is roughly that of John Stuart Mill, is an example of what I mean by the doctrine of a rational or perfectly just society, with the easy allowance that it is not quite perfect now but there is a sure way of making it ever more just. In passing I remark that social science as now usually understood is a product of the disintegration of modern political philosophy and therefore not intelligible by itself. You must have some understanding of modern political philosophy if you want to understand modern, present-day social science.

Now as a proof that classical political philosophy is radically different in this decisive respect from modern political philosophy, I give now one example, and that is Aristotle's doctrine of slavery. I believe one can say that part of Aristotle's political teaching which is most famous, or rather notorious—the most famous or notorious part of Aristotle's teaching. As some of you or many of you will know, Aristotle says slavery is just if the men enslaved are by nature slaves,

and that means if they are not able to take care of themselves and have to have someone who guides them. You can say in the most desirable case a very strong moron—a moron, you know, who would get drunk all the time, would fall into ditches all the time, has to have someone around. But if someone is around, he can be useful, for example, carrying heavy burdens,[4] [felling] trees, and so on and so on. Now when Aristotle discusses in the Seventh Book of the same *Politics* the subject of slavery in a just society, he says that the slaves must be given the hope of emancipation because otherwise they would be dissatisfied with their lot. Now it is obvious that slaves who can be emancipated are not the natural slaves of whom he spoke in Book 1. If one brings these[5] two opposite statements together, one arrives at this suggestion: that Aristotle was aware of the fact that[6] the men who were enslaved perfectly justly would not fill the requirement. In other words, they wouldn't be good enough as slaves; therefore, a concession had to be made to this need and therefore you[7] were compelled also to enslave people who were not by nature slaves: i.e., a certain ingredient of injustice. That Aristotle just doesn't stress this point in this way goes without saying, because this is not[8] a very pleasant thing to talk about.

Now generally speaking, we may say the peculiar teaching of the classics in this sense [is that] there is a disproportion between reason and the city. This disproportion is also the theme of the work we are reading now. But in the *Apology* this is brought out in a very subdued manner, most visibly as follows. If the Athenians were to forbid philosophizing, Socrates would not obey that law. So this is in other words only a contingency, not a necessity. But according to the view accepted by the many, by what people now would call public opinion and by the view underlying the indictment of Socrates, philosophy as such does not recognize the gods recognized by the city; and therefore there is an essential conflict between philosophy and the city and [philosophy] does not depend on any particular law which the Athenians might or might not have established. The last word of the *Apology* in the original is the word god, the only Platonic work ending with god. There is only one Platonic work opening with the word god and this is the *Laws*. And I believe that there is a connection between the *Apology* and the *Laws* as follows: in the Tenth Book of the *Laws*, Plato lays down the principles in which all citizens of a good polis must believe: the existence of god or gods; that they exercise the providence for man; and that they cannot be bribed by sacrifice or prayers.[i] Now in more recent times, in our age Plato has been accused of a lack of liberalism—that he establishes a state religion, a certain fixed belief. This is not the way to look at it. The key point is this: the belief which Plato demands of the citizen of a good city is the belief in[9] the gods who can be known by human reason, whose existence and attributes can be demonstrated by human reason. We can say [that] Plato replaces the gods worshipped by the city in the ordinary sense, the Olympian gods, by the cosmic gods. Now this implies at least this much: that prior to the foundation of that just city, that foundation effected in speech in the Laws, there was that conflict between the city and philosophy of which I spoke.

Now[10] to come back to the *Apology* proper. Its general character, which strikes everyone, is this: he presents a deadly serious conflict. Whether that conflict is necessary or essential or accidental is another matter. A deadly serious conflict. What does deadly serious mean? Most literally, threatening death; and that is of course the case here. Now when we speak of these matters in such terms, we imply [that] death is a very great evil, and therefore when we say "deadly

[i] *Laws* 885b4-885b12.

serious" this is implied generally speaking, and this is of course justified to some extent by the practice of most penal codes, according to which capital punishment the gravest punishment; and punishment is meant to inflict an evil and therefore capital punishment the greatest evil, death the greatest evil. But as we have seen, Socrates questions this very view of death [for] the simple reason [that] we don't know enough or he doesn't know enough about what will come after death so that he cannot say that death is the greatest evil. So what is deadly serious is then for Socrates not the most serious, the unqualifiedly serious. And from here we can understand that the *Apology* is at the same time deadly serious and what seems to be the radical opposite: high comedy. This fact is in a way generally admitted but at the same time obfuscated by the people who speak of Socrates's irony. When you read, for example, Burnet's commentary[11] [you'll] find many references to Socrates's irony. But what Burnet and quite a few others do not see is that Socrates's irony is all-pervasive. I mean, it is not only there where it hits you over the head like a ton of bricks, say, when he would say of a very ugly man (to take a un-Socratic example) that he is a beautiful man. This is an irony which is proper for children, but not—Socrates's irony is subtle and therefore all-pervasive.

Now the reason why the *Apology of Socrates* is bound to be radically ironical is supplied to us, as I have mentioned before, in the *Gorgias*, where Socrates discusses the situation in which he would be when accused before the demos of Athens.[ii] He would be in the situation of a physician, in which a physician finds himself when accused before children of harming them, and the accuser would be naturally the candy dealer who gives them the things which the kids like. How could a man in such a situation make clear to the tribunal what the situation is? And he would have to adapt himself to the capacity of the tribunal. But this adapting oneself to the capacity of[12] someone less considerate, thoughtful, intelligent than oneself—that is one crucial meaning of the word irony which has been somewhat forgotten on the basis of the modern sophistications of irony.

Now Socrates's refutation of Meletus, which we read last time, was introduced by Socrates's changing of the wording of the indictment. And the refutation is based on that change in the wording of the indictment that makes it so very important. The key point in that change is the following one: I [will] use now first the Greek words and then try to state it without the use of Greek words. Whereas Meletus had said in the authentic wording that Socrates does not believe in the gods of the city but introduces demonic things that are new, Socrates drops that word introducing, *eisegoumenos*, and thus in fact replaces introducing by "believing in." So that it runs then, after the Socratic correction or falsification or whatever you wish to call it: Socrates commits a crime by not believing in the gods of the city but believing in other demonic things which are new. Now, and then of course on the basis of that it is very easy to show for Socrates, that if Socrates believes in demonic things he believes in gods, because demonic things are not possible if there are not demons and demons are not possible if there are no gods. Yes. Now, and to prove as it were that this is so, Plato makes Socrates replace the word believing in, *nomizein* in Greek, by another Greek word for believing, *hegeisthai*, which is however the grammatical root of that word, leading in, introducing, which he had dropped. Good.

[ii] *Gorgias* 521d5-22a9.

Now we had begun at the end of the last meeting to discuss the last part of Socrates's defense proper. That last part we may say is a defense of Socrates against Meletus, but not with a view to Meletus but with a view to the judges. In the refutation of Meletus, the explicit refutation, he spoke with a view to Meletus, as is shown most obviously by the fact that it is partly a dialogue between Socrates and Meletus. But now it is not with a view to Meletus but with a view to the jury. Apart from this, the meaning of that last part of the defense is not clear. Socrates lays the greatest stress on the principle or maxim that to act unjustly or disgracefully is much worse than to die or to engage in a death-bringing or, at any rate, dangerous pursuit. From this maxim he concludes that the most unjust and disgraceful thing is to disobey the gods' or a god's command. Such a command must be obeyed more than anything else, including human laws. We arrive more or less at this point, and we had to wonder why Socrates[13] engages here at the beginning of this section in a polemics against [the] individual whom we called, with the help of one of you, a lout, meaning a man who doesn't see that there are things which are disgraceful (with a slight overstatement). I think we have to go on more or less where we stopped last time, 29d2.[14] "If," as I say, "you would let me go under this condition namely, that I will no longer philosophize, yes, then I would." (29c10-29d2)

Mr. Reinken:

> I should say to you, "Men of Athens, I respect and love you, but I shall obey the god rather than you, and while I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up philosophizing or stop exhorting you and pointing out the truth to anyone of you whom I may meet, saying in my accustomed way: 'Most excellent man, are you who are a citizen of Athens, the greatest of cities and the most famous for wisdom and power, not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honour, when you neither care nor take thought for wisdom and truth and the perfection of your soul?'" (29d2-29e3).

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Ya, and for *phronēsis*, for being sensible, and for truth, and so that your soul may be as good as possible. And I think one can translate, paraphrase his last expression by saying "virtue," although it is of course important that . . . . Socrates formulates now the sound principle, the maxim which he follows in his life in the most general manner: man's overriding concern must be with being sensible, with truth, and with virtue. Obedience to the god may be supposed to be a part of this, perhaps of virtue, namely, piety. The tripartition reminds of a well-known tripartition, a tripartition well known from Aristotle: practical wisdom; theoretical wisdom; and moral virtue. These are not Platonic distinctions. How Socrates understands the tripartition we cannot say on the basis of the passage before us, but the purport of this remark—you will see there is no reference to philosophy here, only this general reference to truth, which may be a reference but it is not obvious. Let us go on here.

Mr. Reinken: "And if any of you argues the point, and says he does care, I shall not let him go at once, nor shall I go away, but I shall question and examine and cross-examine him, and if I find that he does not possess virtue, but says he does, I shall rebuke for scorning the things that are of most importance and caring more for what is of less worth." (29e3-30a1)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Now the emphasis is now entirely on virtue; this complicated triad is now dropped. The question is:[15] Has virtue absorbed the two other items, meaning, being sensible or truth? Yet there is now an almost explicit link-up of Socrates's universal maxim with his examination of the Athenians, although that examination is no longer clearly an examination of them in regard to wisdom. Wisdom doesn't occur; he speaks here only of virtue. Socrates admits the possibility that there are Athenians who possess virtue, as you see here, whereas he does not admit the possibility that there are Athenians (including himself, of course) who possesses wisdom, as he had stated very strongly before. He had spoken of the wisdom of Athens[16] in d8, but he said there that Athens is famous or renowned for her wisdom, and this of course does not mean that renown is justified. In fact, it is a bitter joke on the basis of what we have heard before, that Athens should be renowned for her wisdom; and we have seen how Athens looks when examined by Socrates. Ya, and we go on from this point. By the way, if you have any points—but we will finish the first section.

Mr. Reinken: "This I shall do to whomever I meet, young and old, foreigner and citizen, but most to the citizens, inasmuch as you are more nearly related to me. For know—" (30a1-30a4)

LS: By descent are related in this strict sense.

Mr. Reinken: "For know that the god commands me to do this, and I believe that no greater good ever came to pass in the city than my service to the god. For I go about doing nothing else than urging you, young and old, not to care for your persons or your property more than for the perfection of your souls, or even so much—" (30a4-30b1)

LS: Ya, "persons" is of course "bodies."[17] When you think of the meaning of person, personality, isn't that somewhat strange? So let us say "bodies."

Mr. Reinken: [18][For] your body—"and I tell you that virtue does not come from money, but from virtue comes money and all other good things to man, both to the individual and to the state. If by saying these things I corrupt the youth, these things must be injurious; but if anyone asserts that I say other things than these, he says what is untrue." (30b1-30b7)

LS: Well, literally, "he says nothing,"—I mean, it's just hot air.

Mr. Reinken: "Therefore I say to you, men of Athens, either do as Anytus tells you, or not, and either acquit me, or not, knowing that I shall not change my conduct even if I am to die many times over" (30b8-30c1).

LS: Yes. Now Socrates completes now the transition which started before, in 29d6 following, from philosophizing (whatever that may mean) to his teaching, his admonishing men to be virtuous. This admonition is based on knowledge, presupposes that knowledge, namely, on the knowledge that virtue is by far superior to money and all other good things apart from virtue. So this is another side which we have not seen before. This knowledge includes some reasoning. In other words, Socrates doesn't say generally "Be good!" with an exclamation mark. He gives a reason for that, and the reason is here indicated in b2 to 4: "virtue doesn't come out of money,

but out of virtue comes money," and so on and so on.[19] Burnet gives here a note which I think I might read to you, a note on 30b3: "We must certainly not render 'from virtue comes money'! This is a case where interlaced order," of the Greek words, "may seriously mislead." He translates: "'it is goodness that makes money and everything else good for men.'" (Burnet 1964, 204) That is indeed a possible translation. And he makes the point that as Socrates was now in ten-thousandfold poverty, he could hardly recommend virtue as a good investment. [Laughter] That is surely true.

But[20] that doesn't settle the issue, because when you read Plato's *Laws*, Book 1, 631b to c, you will see that here the same thought is expressed without any possibility [of] explaining differently. I have it here; I can read it to you:

> "The laws of Crete, of the Cretans are rightly held in high repute. For they are true laws inasmuch as they effect the well-being of those who use them by supplying all things that are good. Now goods are of two kinds, human and divine; and the human things, goods, are dependent on the divine and he who receives the greater acquires also the less or else he is bereft of both. The lesser goods are those of which health ranks first, beauty the second; the third is strength, and the fourth is wealth. And wisdom in turn has first place among the goods that are divine, temperance of soul comes second, then courage, and finally justice."[iii]

Here, if you have the divine goods, virtues, you have by this very fact also the human goods, health and wealth, which[21] of course runs counter to ordinary experience. But there is some deeper reason for that, and I think we can, if not fathom that reason although see the necessity of looking for it from the following passage[22] [from] the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 6, verse 31 following:

> Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? Or withal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought of the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.[iv]

That is fundamentally the point which Socrates makes. And whether Socrates makes it in the spirit of the Bible is another matter, but there is no negligible reason, to put it mildly, for making this assertion which at first glance seemed to be contradicted by experience.

Now the point which is more immediately important is this: the knowledge of which Socrates makes use when admonishing his fellow citizens does not include an answer to *the* Socratic question or the raising of it, namely, the question: What is virtue? There is nothing of this kind

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[iii] *Laws* 631b2-631c7. Strauss's translation. In the passage, the Athenian Stranger is speaking, telling Clinias what he ought to have said about the laws laid down by Tyrtaeus (hence the quotation marks).
[iv] Matthew 6: 31-34 (Authorized King James Version).

[here]. He presupposes that everyone knows what virtue is, of course, and then he says, "exercise virtue," and gives some reasons why they should do it, because in a way of course it is true that virtue leads to money.[23] Take a fellow who gets, earns millions from his father, and lacks completely self-restraint, orderliness, forethought for the next day, and so on: he will surely get rid of his fortune in a very short time.[24] There is some commonsensical relation between virtue and money there, but of course on a very low level. But we do not know on what level Socrates sometimes spoke to what kind of people. So to repeat this point: the question for which Socrates was so famous[25]: What is virtue?—that virtue which we all praise so highly, and of which we think so highly, and of which we speak so frequently. He traces his activity—which does not include the raising of this question—his activity of urging people forward, toward virtue, to a god, to the god. Now with what right? The god is here that god in Delphi,[26] and the god in Delphi said: No one is wiser than Socrates,[27] or: Socrates is the wisest of human beings. Now is virtue identical with being sensible, with *phronēsis*, and does being sensible consist above all in knowledge of one's ignorance? In that case of course the god, by making Socrates discover his and the others' ignorance, making them know their ignorance, would make them virtuous. And one could perhaps say that what Socrates says about one virtue, courage, before, entitles us to say that courage is knowledge of one's ignorance regarding the things in Hades. You remember we discussed this last time. We fear death because we are sure that what expects us after death is simply terrible.[28] But we do not know what will happen after death and therefore this is a rash act. However, we have seen also last time that such ignorance of the things in Hades does not take care of fear of death, because precisely our ignorance makes us apprehensive. And then [to] try to interpret moderation regarding sensual pleasures in terms of knowledge of ignorance, I believe you would get into some difficulties. For example, don't overeat: because what do you not know there? Of what are you ignorant, if saying to yourself or to someone else: Don't overeat? I think that wouldn't work out.

Now in order to understand the sequel, to which we turn now, let us reread b8 to c1.

Mr. Reinken:

> but if anyone asserts that I say other than these things, he says nonsense[v]. Therefore I say to you, men of Athens, either do as Anytus tells you, or not, and either acquit me, or not, knowing that I shall not change my conduct even if I am to die many times over.
>
> Do not make a disturbance, men of Athens; continue to do what I asked of you, not to interrupt my speech by disturbances, but to hear me; and I believe you will profit by hearing. Now I am going to say some things to you at which you will perhaps cry out; but do not do so by any means. For know that if you kill me— (30b6-30c7)

LS: No, wait, let us stop here. Now the transition. Socrates has in a way talked [about] what he said before, and he promises now to talk bigger still; therefore he expects them to shout. Again, I would like to see what Burnet says here in 30 to—ya, here he translates the word. I do not know

[v] In original: "things than these, he says what is untrue"

now how he[vi] does translate it at the first line: "Don't make a disturbance, you Athenians, but—" How does he go on?

Mr. Reinken: "continue to do what I asked of you" (30c2).

LS: Ya. Well,[29] Burnet translates that more literally: "pray abide by what I have asked you for." (Burnet 1964, 205) The proper use of this word with the dative is of abiding by an agreement, promise, or covenant. Here it means "the promise I asked you to make." Now Socrates has indeed asked them[30] to be quiet on two former occasions: in 17b1, when he asked them—there he speaks of the fact that they should not resent it if he didn't behave, speak as people ordinarily speak in law courts because of his lack of experience. And on the other occasion, in 20e4, when he asked them not to make a disturbance, he refers to the story of Delphi, which follows immediately. Now you see I give this little example (I emphasize it) because it shows again that Socrates does not simply reproduce the first statement, [but] that he always changes it. Now he makes general or universal what originally was said only with a view to special cases. Let us go on.

Mr. Reinken: "For know that if you kill me, I being such a man as I say I am, you will not injure me so much as yourselves; for neither Meletus nor Anytus could injure me; that would be impossible, for I believe it is not God's will that a better man may be injured[vii] by a worse. He might, however—" (30c6-30d1)

LS: Ya. That is of course a bit too strong. "For I do not think that it is right or meet." There is nothing of god here. "That[31] the better man be harmed by the worse one." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "don't think that it is right or meet that a better man should be injured by a worse.[viii] He might, however, perhaps kill me or banish me or disfranchise me; and perhaps he thinks he would thus inflict great injuries upon me, and others may think so, but I do not; I think he does himself a much greater injury by doing what he is doing now—killing a man unjustly. And so—" (30d1-30d7)

LS: No, "trying to kill a man unjustly." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> And so, men of Athens, I am now making my defense not for my own sake, as one might imagine, but far more for yours, that you may not by condemning me err in your treatment of the gift the God gave you. For if you put me to death, you will not easily find another, who, to use a rather absurd figure, attaches himself to the city as a gadfly to a horse, which, though large and well bred, is sluggish on account of his size and needs to be aroused by stinging. I think the god fastened me upon the city in some such capacity, and I go about arousing, and urging and

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[vi] That is, H. N. Fowler, translator of the dialogue in the Loeb edition.
[vii] In original: "better man be injured"
[viii] In original: "believe it is not God's will that a better man may be injured by a worse"

> reproaching each one you, constantly alighting upon you everywhere the whole day long. (30d7-31a3).

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Now this is then the reason why Socrates's life, not of great worth to him, is of infinite worth so to speak to the city of Athens. Meletus and Anytus could not harm Socrates[32] and the reason given is that Socrates thinks—thinks in the loose sense of the word, like Latin *puto* or something—that it would not be right or meet that they would harm him. This term, which I translate "right or meet," was used before in 21b6 when he spoke of the god's Oracle[33]: he said "it is not right or meet for the god to lie"; he did not say the god cannot lie. This word, which I translate by "think" in the crude sense of the word where it doesn't have the severe meaning; this word, *oiesthai* in Greek, occurs quite frequently in this connection, it has a density. But this is minor compared with the main point here, especially toward the end of this passage.[34] This is the sole source for this well-known image of Socrates as an Uncle Sam—you know, the wartime posters, "I want you," pointing at you—who does nothing but buttonholing every Athenian he meets: Did you take care of becoming virtuous today? Did you do your good deed today, as it were? [Laughter] You remember, that is very different from what he did when examining the Athenians on the basis of the Delphic oracle, because there he examined everyone whom he believed to be wise. This is a finite job. [Laughter][35] [Here he examines] everyone the whole day, everywhere. It couldn't be stated more emphatically. Here[36] it would appear there is no examination of people supposed to be wise where it would be worthwhile, but an admonishing of everyone with a view not to wisdom but to virtue in the simple popular sense of the word, where knowledge of what virtue is is simply presupposed.

Now this passage[37] shows us with particular clarity the great difference between Socrates's own presentation of himself—well, it is of course also Plato's presentation of Socrates's presentation of himself and Plato's presentation of Socrates in the dialogues proper; there we do not find that Socrates is jumping at every passerby with this question. But especially striking, there is a great difference between what we may call voluntary dialogues and involuntary dialogues: [between] dialogues which Socrates seeks, is eager for, and those in which he engages only because as a polite man he cannot possibly avoid them; and he seeks conversation with the promising, and he avoids conversation or he willy-nilly engages in conversation with non-promising. So that's an entirely different picture than this, but this has caught the fancy of most biographers, especially the more popular ones.

Now there is a point which Burnet makes which was brought out by the translation, the comparison with the gadfly, and Burnet points out, I think as this translator admitted[38] settling "on every part of you,"[39] as a gadfly, the whole day, everyone, on every part of you. (Burnet 1964, 206) This makes the simile of course more ludicrous, but I think it is meant to be ludicrous and therefore we should translate accordingly. Do you see that? I don't have to labor that point, I trust. Good. Now I think we go on here.

Mr. Reinken: "Such another is not likely to come to you, gentlemen; but if you take my advice, you will spare me. But you, perhaps, might be angry, like people awakened from a nap, and might slap me, as Anytus advises—" (31a3-31a6)

LS: "Slap," meaning like a fly. Ya?

Mr. Reinken: Swat.

LS: Ya.

Mr. Reinken: "and easily kill me; then you would pass the rest of your lives in slumber, unless God, in his care for you, should send someone else to sting you." (31a6-31a10)

LS: Ya, let us stop here one moment. Now according to this presentation, the Athenians regard sleep as the most desirable state. Well, in a metaphoric sense it is of course easy to understand, because all of us, to [a greater] or [lesser][40] degree,[41] dislike intellectual exertions. And not engaging in any intellectual exertion means of course to be intellectually asleep and to be drowsy. But Socrates[42] simply implies here that they regard sleep as the most desirable state. Is there anyone among you who has read the whole *Apology* and is reminded by this passage of another passage?[43]

Mr. Fielding: When he discusses what death may be like.

LS: Can you speak a little bit louder, and explain it to the class?

Mr. Fielding: I believe he says toward the end of the dialogue that death may be one of two things; either a very long sleep in which we do not dream, the most pleasant thing imaginable—

LS: Yes. So in other words,[44] we will take it up when we come to that passage, but I think I should mention it already now. This view [that] thoughtlessness, complete thoughtlessness[45] is a pleasant state, a desirable state, is adopted by Socrates himself in a final speech in 40c to e. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: [46]"And that I am, as I say, a kind of gift from the god, you might understand from this; for I have neglected all my own affairs and have been enduring the neglect of my concerns all these years, but I am always busy in your interest." (31a10-31b4)

LS: Ya. "Also of my domestic affairs all the time." Good.

Mr. Reinken: "I am always busy in your interest, coming to each one of you individually like a father or an elder brother and urging you to care for virtue—" (31b4-31b6)

LS: Now let us stop here. For so many years, Socrates did nothing but your things, *ta metera*. He neglected his own things. The question is: For how many years? Well, I would suggest since the Delphic oracle, because that was apparently the thing which[47] induced Socrates to become so different from his fellow citizens. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "now that is not like human conduct. If I derived any profit from this and received pay for these exhortations, there would be some sense in it—" (31b6-31b9)

LS: Ya,[48] and the fact that Socrates does not derive any monetary benefit from his activity and hence that it does—his activity does not make sense; [that] it's not reasonable to do something when you get no money is a proof that his activity is due to the god. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "but now you yourselves see that my accusers, though they accuse me of everything else in such a shameless way, have not been able to work themselves up to such a pitch of shameless as to produce a witness to testify that I ever exacted or asked pay of anyone. For I think I have a sufficient witness that I speak the truth, namely, my poverty." (31b9-31c4)

LS: Yes. He boasts very much of his poverty. Now he speaks here: they have not gone to that extreme of impudence to say that Socrates earned money through his activity, and the extreme of impudence would show itself in their producing a witness to this effect. This forces us to raise a question: Did the accusers produce witnesses for their other charges? Well, we can only say Socrates is absolutely silent about that, and his silence can be interpreted in very different ways. But it could be. This possibility has of course to be considered.

Now here we make a stop for a moment and see whether there are any points which you would like to raise. You must have noticed that there was a quite—a very different Socrates is now visible from the one we saw first, who went around and cross-examined everyone and tried to make him aware of his ignorance; and the other Socrates who admonishes everyone to be virtuous by such homely and commonsensical arguments of which he gave a specimen, and presupposing therefore that he and the addressees know what virtue is [and] are not ignorant in that very important sense. That is a very striking change. And Socrates [is] now completely a man living in the open all the time—as I put it, buttonholing everyone with his simple question—and he doesn't say a word here, by the way, I forgot to mention that but I ought to have mentioned [that] he doesn't say a word to this effect: that this making a nuisance of himself by buttonholing everyone made him hated. I forgot that entirely. You see what the trouble is: one sometimes doesn't see the most obvious things. And whereas[49] the post-Delphic activity, examining, testing everyone, whether he does not pretend to be wise while not being wise, that naturally made him hated. But such a man who would do that I think would be regarded as a nuisance and funny, and would not become an object of hatred. Good. Now, yes?

Student: The original charge against Socrates was that he introduced different gods into the city. Socrates changed this charge to say that he believed in different gods and he refuted that.

LS: Yes.

Student: Or he did not believe in the gods and he refuted that. Now, the original charge said—charged Socrates with an action that he couldn't do alone, that involved other people: introducing gods.

LS: Not necessarily. No, that I didn't say. I mean, then you must take it quite literally, as Xenophon takes it, by not speaking of *eisegeisthai*, leading in, but *eispherein*, carrying in, as it were, idols. But if they are light, I don't see why a single man couldn't even carry in idols.

[Laughter] But well, let us assume there are big ones, then he would need the help of other people.

Student: Well,[50] my point was going to hinge on that the city was more concerned not with what Socrates believed but with what he taught, and that the charge was actually that he was teaching different gods than the city believed in—that he broke apart this charge into two points and said: Well, if I teach them, I have to believe in them, and I will have to believe in something the city doesn't like, but in fact I do believe in gods. And second, that[51] he now defends his teaching. At this point he's saying that "you have to agree with me that it is necessary for me to teach this."

LS: But here there is no—

Student: Indirectly he's answering the original charge against him.

LS: Can you show that? I mean, I indicated how one could say that virtue is all-inclusive, includes piety, and piety includes—but here there is already a question—includes worship of and belief in the gods as worshipped by the city of Athens. But I'm willing to grant that, although it is not self-evident. This is a way in which one could make it up, but there is no explicit reference to that. The only thing which Socrates does is [make] a tacit reference to his piety by saying: What I do, I do at the command of the god. And to do what the god tells a man to do is a sign of piety; that is the connection. Yes?

Mr. Shulsky: You mentioned at the beginning of the class that in the Tenth Book of the *Laws* Plato refers to a city in which people would believe only those gods that are evident to human reason, or proved by reason or something—[ix]

LS: Yes.

Mr. Shulsky: Like that. And so this would—this would mean then, at least as far as this question is concerned, Plato envisaged the possibility of a rational city, rational political order.

LS: Yes, but the question is of course: To what extent did he regard the polis or the city of the *Laws* as possible? That is—up to this point you are perfectly right. It needs a part of—ya, in itself, I would say it, ya. Up to this point.

Mr. Bruell: In connection with that, you made—

LS: By the way, formally[52] what you say is also true of the *Republic*. The *Republic* presents the most perfect polis, the simply just polis. And therefore you can say here [that] you have the perfect harmony between reason and the city. And that needs some argument and some penetration from entering into the subject in order to see that this is not possible. So the best city of the *Laws* is of questionable justice in the light of the truly just city of the *Republic*. That I should have answered, ya? That one can easily show, I think. And it is explicitly said that this

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[ix] *Laws* 885b4-885b12.

best city of the *Laws* is arrived at by deviating from the sacred line, namely, absolute communism and so on and so on. So I granted in a way too much. Yes?

Mr. Bruell: That answers my question because you made in your opening statement—when you said that classical political philosophy denies that a completely rational or perfectly just society can come into existence purely by human means, but is that last phrase required? I mean, would the same—

LS: It is required in order to see the difference between the biblical notion of the kingdom of God—after all, *kingdom* of God, it's also originally [a] political thing and what the subject of classical or modern political philosophy as such is. That's the reason. And there is an agreement here between the classics and the Bible insofar as they in fact deny both the possibility of a perfect society, the kingdom of God, coming into being by the human means alone.

Mr. Bruell: In other words, it's not a question of chance.

LS: No. Well, from the biblical point of view there is no chance to speak of, and surely not as regards the being or non-being of the kingdom of God.

Mr. Bruell: But[53] from the point of view of classical political philosophy, "by human means" doesn't mean to leave open the possibility of—

LS: Oh, I did not think—I see now, I did not think of that. Ya, this surely is true. That is true, but the question is whether that best regime which could come into being under very favorable circumstances by chance, whether that is unqualifiedly just. I did not think of the chance question . . . . Ya?

Student: When we were talking about Socrates—well, who of the audience, of the Athenians there would know what Socrates had spoken and . . . . We said that Socrates actually taught or held his dialogues away from the marketplace, and that the knowledge the people in the arena there would have of what Socrates said was limited most likely to the marketplace, and that there he questioned people, attacked or questioned people to find out who was wise. Now does what Socrates say, that he[54] serves as the gadfly of the city change that? Or is that—

LS: In what sense?

Student: Well, he—

LS: I mean what you—in other words,[55] when he says this word everywhere, which is very ambiguous, which can mean at every part of the body, in the sense of the simile, or it can mean at every place, and therefore of course also the marketplace. Ya?

Student: Yeah, but what he is doing everywhere is different than simply exposing those who think they are wise or is that—

LS: Ya, that is the point which I tried to make. This is somehow brought into oblivion in favor of something else, namely, of his admonishing to virtue which as such has no relation to pointing out, to make men aware of their ignorance. I mean,[56] some of you [who] have ever read Xenophon's *Memorabilia* will know quite a few of these admonitions of Socrates to virtue. Especially, I believe [in] Book 1, chapter 3, if my memory doesn't escape me, there is a beautiful example where Socrates as it were speaks on the stump, addresses a multitude of people, and tells them an admonition to self-control by raising such questions: Would you entrust your son for education and your daughter for watching [LS chuckles]—you see this insidious distinction—would you entrust your son for education and your daughter for watching to a man who lacks self-control, and so on and so on?[x] [Laughter] While you should think [that] there is not a single raising of a question "what is?" here, but only admonition to this particular virtue. And other things he makes clear, for example, to his son, who was displeased with his notorious mother, Xanthippe, because she nagged him so much. And he convinces him, and by a very beautiful argument, that it is unreasonable of him to be displeased with his mother. This is again leading up to virtue without any attempt to make him wiser in any precise sense of the term. Here the argument, by the way, is also very amusing. And he [Socrates] says, when he [Lamprocles] complains about the terrible things she does to him, he asks him: Does she bite you? And he says: No! But she says terrible things which no one can bear. And then[57] Socrates says to his son: Did you ever go to the theater? Did you hear what terrible things the actors say to each other? [Lamprocles]: Yes, but they don't mean it! [Laughter] Socrates: But does your mother mean it?[xi] [Laughter] You see, the whole argument turns around the ambiguity of meaning, meaning something. So this is—and any of these stories of Xenophon would be a good example of what this admonition to virtue means—and which is of course something very good, and helpful, and praiseworthy, but is [58]surely not that Delphic activity of which he had spoken before. Yes?

Mr. Fielding: At 30b, Socrates says that—or perhaps concedes that, if by saying these things I corrupt the youth, these things must be injurious." [30b4-30b6] Would you say some more about whether that[59] is indeed the case?

LS: [60]In other words, what he would mean by saying that [61]virtue doesn't come out of money, but out of virtue does money come, and so on—ya, these here are the things which Socrates says, and therefore if he is accused of corrupting the young, it can only refer to this statement or statements of a similar kind. That's the point which you make. Well, what do you say? Socrates makes no other statements, in other words, except to praise virtue as the root of all good things. And in what sense could he conceivably say this is corrupting the young?

Mr. Fielding: Well, he wouldn't, but it is possible that Athens would have.

LS: No, why could Athens say it? I would state, on the contrary, so to speak the only man who could regard this possibly as corrupting the young would be Socrates, insofar as the question What is virtue? is not raised and therefore that state of being asleep, of drowsiness, is continued.

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[x] Xenophon *Memorabilia* I. 5.2.
[xi] Xenophon *Memorabilia* II. 2.1.

Mr. Fielding: But isn't it possible that Athens doesn't really care for virtue? Wait, I mean that the accusation Socrates—

LS: Well, I would assume that Athens had her reasonable percentage of criminals and so, but the average Athenian of course was as much interested in children obeying their parents, in brothers living in amity, and in friends being truly friends and not parasites or what not.[62] I think there is no reason to question that. The situation becomes somewhat different when you go over from these ordinary domestic situations, as it were, to the political situations—for example, whether in a given war a gross injustice against the enemy might not be advisable. Think of the story of Mytilene, you know, when Cleon wanted to have this city punished with extermination because they had broken an alliance with Athens.[xii] And[63] for some time the majority was in favor of that beastly act, but[64] [then] it became serious. But, as people say, and it is a very common saying of a candidate running for office: he is against sin. This is relatively simple, you know, to agree to these matters. It is another matter not to sin, [65] but when the sin becomes highly profitable (at least at first glance) for the commonwealth as a whole, then opinions differ already in a grave way. Do you see my point? But this is not here under discussion. Here is the point[66] that confirms only[67] what I said before. Socrates corrupts the young. What's the basis for that? That people make this charge. Originally it was that he debunks the respected people and he uses young men to do that debunking by themselves, and that is still more obnoxious than the debunking done by Socrates. But here there is no longer any question of debunking; there is a question of admonishing to virtue, and only in a subordinate way, when this man becomes aware that he has not sufficiently taken care of his virtue and Socrates says: Well, mend that.

Mr. Fielding: But isn't this admonition to virtue also a case of undermining parental authority on certain occasions?

LS: In what sense? That Socrates usurps the role of a father or elder brother? Perhaps. I mean, it is possible that a father is so eager to be the only one to give commands to his son that he would resent it, that's possible. But it is doubtful. But if Socrates—but it would be different if he would undermine explicitly the authority of the father by debunking the claim of the father to be wise, would it not? This could come in.[68] What you are driving at, I take it, is that there is not such a great difference or such a radical difference between the two things as I have asserted. I admit that. But still, if you take the massive statements in the first case, in the second case, the difference is nevertheless there. That there is a transition, a gradual transition from, say, summer to winter, doesn't prove that there is no difference between summer and winter. Ya?

Mr. Fielding: But the fact that [a] transition has been made into winter does not necessarily mean that the evils that were perpetrated in the summer are not also perpetrated in the winter also.

LS: Yes. Well, then give me a better example, a better simile.[69] But that there are gradual differences of all kinds does not do away with the essential difference, because even if the two

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[xii] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* III: 37-40.

things come together, even if in a given case by admonishing to virtue he corrupts the young in the first sense, still this is a coincidence of two different things; it is not identical. Yes?

Student: When I read that maxim I thought it was corrupting because it contained the implication that virtue should be pursued for the sake of a reward and not for its own sake.

LS: Yes, this is a good point that you make; that is of course what Socrates or Plato meant. But that shows you the level of this argument of the *Apology* as a whole and of this presentation of Socrates, that this issue is not raised—you know, that there is in Socrates, in Plato, and in Xenophon that strain which connects him somehow with what later on came to be called utilitarianism: virtue is essentially for the sake of something amoral. I don't know whether the Utilitarians would put it this way, but this is what they mean. And that is there. And on the other hand you have also, especially in Plato but also in Xenophon, the other view: that virtue must be chosen for its own sake. That's a very complicated story. But [70]the interesting thing in the *Apology* is that this is the only thing said here, because the *Apology* is the only speech which Socrates addresses to the Athenians at large. All other conversations which Plato wrote are conversations between Socrates and an individual or a very few individuals. And the general view of Plato is that in a public speech addressed to many[71], you cannot but be much more crude than in a talk to, especially to selected individuals.[72] In other words, ordinary rhetoric is essentially inferior to what Plato calls dialectics, the art of conversing with one or a few. Yes. Now there was someone there—you, first.

Student: Don't we perhaps find an analogy here between . . . Athens and the *Meno*, in the beginning of the *Meno* there is the attempt to attain knowledge of what is virtue, which, when that fails, we develop the thesis that Socrates was perhaps trying—without explaining to Meno was virtue was—[to] lead Meno to some approximation of the virtuous life. It might not—in the course of his dealing with Athens, Socrates [might] have developed, come to a similar development in that beginning by trying to lead the Athenians to knowledge and having—because, like Meno, they wouldn't come—for the majority, the unpromising—to advocate, admonish them to virtue.

LS: I couldn't follow you—

Mr. Reinken: Is it that the *Apology* may be moving with respect to the Athenians as the dialogue *Meno* did with respect to Meno? First, you try to get virtue based in knowledge, and when that fails you settle for exhortation.

LS: Yes. But I believe you must not forget there is this fundamental and obvious difference: that in the *Meno* the attempt is made to lead someone in that conversation to a better understanding, whereas here it is prescribed by the situation that Socrates must obey the law and must defend himself. And therefore he must comply with the requirements of a defense, and this would seem to be the more natural key to the changes here.

Student: No, what I was saying was that this is not in the court just out of the *Apology*, but in the course of Socrates's questioning of in Athens from the time of the oracle that his original

impetus, his original attempt was through conversations to lead to virtue as he originally tried in the *Meno*, i.e., through knowledge, and that when failed with the majority of unpromising people, with them he resorted to admonitions, while—

LS: Yes,[73] that might be. There is other evidence for that. That might be. For example, take the *Euthyphro*, where Socrates first tries to go deeper into the question of piety but then, precisely because this man Euthyphron is not able to bear that and it would only harm him, he leads him back to the simple view: prayer and sacrifices, that's all, as prescribed by law. That's all. Ya, but here in this case the conversation with Euthyphro is not a voluntary conversation of Socrates; Euthyphro forces him into that conversation, as you would see at the beginning. In other words, we must consider the difference between the way in which Socrates presents himself here with my exaggeration—Uncle Sam—with the way in which Plato presents him everywhere else and in which there is no such going around in Athens. And the only two dialogues which have come down under the name of Plato to us which begin with Socratic buttonholing are the *Minos* and the *Hipparchus*, two short dialogues which today are generally regarded as spurious, and which both begin—Socrates asked a nameless man "What is law?" in the one case, and in the other, "What is love of gain?" without any preparation, just as [in] the one here. But here he does not admonish to virtue in the simple sense as presented here, but raises a typically Socratic "what is?" question. That's a different story. Now someone here had—oh, you.

Student: You said last week, if I can change the subject, that while Socrates apparently subordinates the impiety charge to the charge of corruption, in fact he reduces the charge of corruption to the charge of impiety.[74] Could you suggest his reasons for that procedure?

LS: Well, that he in fact subordinates the corruption charge to the impiety charge is intelligible because[75] what they ultimately mean is that Socrates corrupts the youth exclusively by his impious teaching and not by immoral practices and so on, ya? Is this not in fact? But why does he present the corruption charge as preceding the impiety charge? That was made quite clear, because according to Socrates what distinguishes him from all other Athenians is his examining every Athenian who seems to be wise. And then his young companions imitated, and these young companions are more resented by the victims than Socrates himself; and therefore they say [that] Socrates corrupts the young. But when they are asked: How, and by doing what, or teaching what? then they say not the truth, of course, which would be unbearable for them (because they debunk us, "he makes the youth debunk us"), but they fall back on a wholly spurious and fictitious reason [76]which they invent for the purpose, namely, that he investigates the things aloft and beneath the earth and so on. And therefore the charge closest to what actually happened is the corruption charge.

Student: That's closest to what actually happened in Socrates's presentation, whereas the fact that in the actual charge impiety is mentioned first, and not corruption.

LS: Ya, sure. Well, that is clear, because is it not so, I mean that in the genesis, in the order of coming into being, according to Socrates's presentations, [the] corruption charge precedes the impiety charge. But in the order of being, or of importance, the opposite is obviously true,

because if Socrates were to corrupt the young by improprieties, [it] would obviously not be[77] a capital crime as it is if he corrupts the young by impiety. Yes?

Student: Is it possible that in describing what he's doing in terms of buttonholing every Athenian, Socrates is trying to be sarcastic and that he is suggesting that since he is somehow, since he's speaking to relatively simpleminded people, he is putting his action and his mission in very simpleminded terms?

LS: Sure, obviously—

Same student: It's a joke on his hearers, in a sense.

LS: [78]Exactly. In other words, take it quite without any malice or viciousness or so, that of course, he does. But that exactly is the primary—or not the primary, but a meaning very close to the primary meaning of irony. I mean,[79] our present notion of irony stems from so-called Romanticism and, by the way, Kierkegaard plays some role here by his doctoral dissertation.[xiii] But the original meaning of irony is very simple. Irony means dissimulation. Dissimulation. And therefore of course something bad. But it is a peculiar kind of dissimulation, namely, the dissimulation not of one's defects but of one's virtues. Understatements are untrue statements, obviously, but [80] understatements about oneself are something decent, ya? Good. One can say if it is a vice, it is a graceful one.[81] I'm following now Aristotle first, because Aristotle[82] makes these elementary things clearer. Aristotle says of the magnanimous man—the man who,[83]claiming high honors for himself while possessing them, while deserving them—he says he is ironical towards the many. Now that doesn't mean that he has a despicable enjoyment of his superiority to others—that would make him despicable—but that he simply cannot reveal his worth as he sees it to the many without seeming to be an unbearable boaster and booster, and therefore he will understate it or he will conceal it.

Now, but if virtue par excellence is wisdom, as we must always presuppose in the case of men like Plato and Aristotle, then of course irony would consist above all in concealing one's wisdom on the part of a wise man, in order not by obtruding his wisdom unnecessarily and unprofitably to hurt the feelings of less-wise people. And there are, one can say, two ways in which Socrates does it, and the first is[84] that he raises questions and doesn't answer them[85]. If you address a question to someone, you imply obviously that he knows the answer and you don't. Or another way is by being satisfied with answers with which he cannot be satisfied. But the truth is out. And then that irony, I mean, this sneering element which some people find in irony in the vulgar use, that is to be left out. That is in one sense true of the young people. When Socrates debunks a pompous ass—we have seen that before—this Socrates regards as his solemn duty. These young people find it funny and they snicker, probably, ya? And that is forgivable because they are young. Good.

I think, if you don't mind—keep your question in your mind and tell me later.

[xiii] Søren Kierkegaard, *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (1841).

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted “that is that—.”

[2] Deleted “that, even the first—and.”

[3] Deleted “which is there called.”

[4] Deleted “trim—fall—.”

[5] Deleted “things together, these, these”

[6] Deleted “the perfectly just—just—.”

[7] Deleted “had to—.”

[8] Deleted “something.”

[9] Deleted “the gods, which can be know—who can be—.”

[10] Deleted “as for the—.”

[11] Deleted “we’ll.”

[12] Deleted “something—.”

[13] Deleted “brings—.”

[14] Deleted “Now, if you would read it. If you would read. Yeah, no.”

[15] Deleted “has virtue been absorbed.”

[16] Deleted “but—.”

[17] Deleted “which is…you know.”

[18] Deleted “Of.”

[19] Deleted “Now, this thought….”

[20] Deleted “that doesn’t mean that Socrates….”

[21] Deleted “is.”

[22] Deleted “of.”

[23] Deleted “He must—.”

[24] Deleted “So to some—.”

[25] Deleted “that he raised the question.”

[26] Deleted “Now—.”

[27] Deleted “or if you—.”

[28] Deleted “And if we—.”

[29] Deleted “he—.”

[30] Deleted “to make….”

[31] Deleted “yes, ‘that.’”

[32] Deleted “for….”

[33] Deleted “and he said—but there he did not say—he said.”

[34] Deleted “Here is—.”

[35] Deleted “But to—as he does—as he does here.”

[36] Deleted “there is no—.”

[37] Deleted “is of course—.”

[38] Deleted “and Burnet points out, I think as this translator admitted—.”

[39] Deleted “you know.”

[40] Changed from “to more or less.”

[41] Deleted “loathe to….”

[42] Deleted “does not make here—he.”

[43] Deleted “Fielding: When he discusses what death may be like.

LS: I beg your pardon?”

[44] Deleted “that—.”

[45] Deleted “would be….”

[46] Deleted “Yet.”

[47] Deleted “made….”

[48] Deleted “so the fact—.”

[49] Deleted “the Delphic activity.”

[50] Deleted “that’s.”

[51] Deleted “I—.”

[52] Moved “formally;” deleted “excuse me—.”

[53] Deleted “in the—.”

[54] Deleted “does here—.”

[55] Deleted “he would do—.”

[56] Deleted “if you—when you—.”

[57] Deleted “he says ‘there you.’”

[58] Deleted “not”

[59] Deleted “indeed is the case, whether that.”

[60] Deleted “We—now, that if… Yeah, be—.”

[61] Deleted “not out of money”

[62] Deleted “I don’t see—no—.”

[63] Deleted “there was.”

[64] Deleted “there you had there.”

[65] Deleted “and”

[66] Deleted “only that Socrates says—what—.”

[67] Deleted “what—.”

[68] Deleted “You are driving—.”

[69] Deleted “But the thing that…two phenomena…that there are transitional phenomena between two of these things does not do—.”

[70] Deleted “here it is”
[71] Deleted “you must be.”

[72] Deleted “That is….”

[73] Deleted “but the question is—yeah.”

[74] Deleted “LS: Yeah.

Q: Why—.”

[75] Deleted “according….”

[76] Moved “namely”
[77] Deleted “as—is not.”

[78] Deleted “Yeah—yeah, but you—.”

[79] Deleted “you know.”

[80] Deleted “they”
[81] Deleted “But ultimately—.”

[82] Deleted “is here….”

[83] Deleted “possessing”
[84] Deleted “by—.”

[85] Deleted “and this—no”

Session 7: November 8, 1966

Leo Strauss: Now first there was a question.[1]

Student: Well,[2] I wanted you to clarify somewhat more for me why atheism is the truly serious charge of the two in the light of the fact that, whereas in the cross-examination of Meletus Meletus agrees with Socrates in saying that atheism is the more fundamental charge, but in what immediately preceded, Socrates seemed to tell us that atheism was only something that was charged because of the embarrassment of men who were inspected by the youth who had heard Socrates.

LS: Yes. There is no contradiction between the two things.[3] According to Socrates's assertion, the charge of atheism is baseless; therefore he has to explain how it could arise. And then he tells the story of the Delphic oracle and his examining the Athenians in regard to wisdom, his debunking of these people, and especially the debunking of them by the young. And then these people, getting angry as people would, say: Socrates corrupts the young. And then when they are asked: But what does he do?—and then they say: Well, he is an atheist; he teaches atheism, because they would not say of course that [4]he debunks us and these young people debunk us. That is not a reason which people would give. And then they say something which is a very grave matter: that Socrates doesn't recognize the gods of the polis, of the city. And naturally this is in *weight* the most important charge, more important than corruption because someone might corrupt the young[5] through more trivial things and then it wouldn't be a capital crime. It becomes a capital crime by being connected with the impiety charge. There is no difficulty in that. It all turns around the question: Is the charge against Socrates as baseless as it seems to be? One can state this difficulty also as follows: Socrates is accused of not acknowledging the gods of the city. Does he ever refute that charge? Does he refute that charge? He refutes the charge that he does not believe in or acknowledge any gods in general, but he does this only ad hominem, because the same Meletus had asserted that Socrates acknowledges demonic things, and then Socrates proved beautifully [that] you can't acknowledge demonic things if you do not acknowledge demons. And demons are the children of gods, and if you believe in demons, you believe in gods, just as a man who believes in mules believes in horses. You remember that? So the charge itself is never refuted by Socrates. Yes?

Student: Is it possible to prove that one believes in gods because—can't any affirmation of faith be claimed to be a lie by the accuser?

LS: Yes. That is a great difficulty which led in a way to modern liberalism, but this is not subject to any law. But in former times, as long as there were established religions in this sense, there were criteria; and a very simple one, which is good enough, is if someone says explicitly: I do not believe in what you, the community as a whole, believes. Of course I mean it is thinkable that he believes it, and out of some very strange reason he says the opposite, perhaps because he wishes to become a martyr. That may be. But generally speaking, this was thought to be good enough, just as today if someone says he is a communist, he is generally believed[6] [to be] a

communist and also will suffer from the consequence of that, ya, even if he is not a communist. Although[7] there are crazy people; that's possible . . . . Good. Yes?

Student: Well, the first reaction to the debunking of the young people was that Socrates is an atheist; this idea got spread around—

LS: Well, not the first; the first reaction is that Socrates corrupts the young[8] and the second reaction is—

Student: And then how does it proceed from there to the specific charge about the gods? Is there any kind of connection there or is it—

LS: No, but[9] what is the worst thing which a man could do to corrupt the young? I mean, what could it be?[10] Some homosexual improprieties? This was not quite such a case—even now it is of course not a capital crime in any sense, but it was less, much less so in Athens. But what thing with grave consequences could a man be accused of? The most massive thing and the gravest thing was of course impiety.

Student: Now what I'm wondering about is the difference between impiety in general, not believing in any gods, and the question about the gods of the city. Did they first of all think that he was just an atheist in itself and then this later charge just sort of grew from that because this is maybe more serious?

LS: Ya. Well, you know how it is in the context. Socrates makes a trap for Meletus and asks him: Do you mean to say[11] I do not believe in the gods of the city, but in other gods? And in order to aggravate the matter, the accuser says: No, you don't believe in any gods. And then Socrates says: Look, but you say I believe in demonic things, and hence I believe in gods. So the issue of the gods of the city is avoided, and this is to say nothing of the more interesting thing: that Socrates changes the wording of the charge and thus establishes a basis for his rebuttal to Meletus which does not exist on the basis of the authentic wording of the charge. I have discussed that at some length. Yes.

Student: You asked the question: What would be the grave kind of corruption of the young? Of course, obviously teaching atheism is one. Couldn't another be educating men who become or are likely to become parents and that—

LS: Yes, this surely played also a role, bu it does not come up here in Plato's—in Xenophon this is discussed at some length, but here it does not come up.

Student: Is this—why is it—

LS: Because I believe Plato[12] in his great honesty wished to make clear that the most serious issue, the most fundamental issue, is that between philosophy and the gods of the city. Surely Alcibiades' conduct and Critias' conduct, which are alluded to in the *Apology* but developed at

great length in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, were there.[i] In other words, some of these young people who surrounded Socrates proved to be more than good for nothings from the point of view of the respectable lawabiding citizen, and that of course reflected on Socrates's innocence, there is no question. But the fact is that Plato doesn't make anything, [so] to speak, of that whereas the atheism charge is underlined. Yes?

Student: . . . Does it follow that if the philosopher does not debunk the Athenians in public, he will not be accused of impiety?

LS: Ya. Well, you see, if a man sits at home and cultivates his garden, pays his taxes, and goes to war and so on, and never talks about the things of greatest concern to anybody except[13] [to say] "you are right" when someone tells him something, nothing will happen to him.

Student: But debunking the Athenians in public is hardly—

LS: It is not a legal crime—

Student: equivalent to discussing the greatest matters.

LS: No, no. Socrates doesn't say so, although he seems to present it as that, but it creates hatred, doesn't it? I mean, that is what Socrates asserts, and quite plausibly: someone goes around and debunks all the people who are looked up to by their contemporaries, he[14] is not a likable fellow.

Student: Whyis this implied in philosophy? In other words, why is there a necessary conflict between philosophy and the city that makes it . . . .

LS: Ya. That is a long question, but I would like to say something. I have prepared a brief statement on the subject partly taking up some things which I said last time. Yes?

Student: You said that Socrates or that Plato wants to make clear that the great issue between the philosopher and the city is with respect to impiety and not with respect to corruption. If that's the case, I'm surprised that he changes the wording of the charge so that corruption—it seems that he would do this in all possible ways and hence make—accepting the original wording of the charge where impiety came first, but he doesn't.

LS: Ya, but this is necessary, having given this account of the genesis of this charge: debunking by the young. Socrates, corrupter of the young; Socrates, the impious man. From this point of view the first crime is of course corrupting the young. It comes first in time, but this[15] is not decisive because what is first in time is not necessarily first in rank, because the question arises, is raised by Socrates explicitly: By doing what? By teaching what do I corrupt the young? And then the answer is: By teaching them not to acknowledge the gods of the city. So the corruption charge is reduced to the impiety charge. Is this so difficult to understand, that something may be prior in time and posterior in rank?

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[i] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I. 2.24-48.

Student: Although in fact—I didn't think—maybe I'm just excessively stupid. I might be excessively stupid, I didn't notice that[16] about the—

LS: No, no. I didn't say that. [Laughter] And I did not mean it, either.

Student: [17]I didn't notice until you pointed it out that corruption was reduced to impiety. I was struck by the[18] more general statement that corruption seems to come first. And it seems to me that there must be something to it. There must be more people than just myself who were struck by that and not struck by the—

LS: Yes, I mean, the corruption charge is, as a whole taken by itself, divorced from the impiety charge, more harmless. And therefore Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* devotes, say, four pages (I forget the exact number) to the impiety charge and, say, thirty pages to the corruption charge because the hot iron was the impiety charge, not the corruption charge.[ii] And you see the point that Socrates was friendly at some time with Alcibiades and Critias is not in itself a capital crime. I mean, guilt by association doesn't go so far, you know? And then Socrates could say that he[iii] didn't learn from me to try to become a tyrant. And[19] there would have been, I suppose, quite a few witnesses who would have borne that out. Good. So now let us then continue.

The conflict between the city and philosophy is an essential conflict if the city is not possible without the gods of the city, and philosophy is not compatible with recognizing those gods. Otherwise the conflict would be accidental. This problem does not exist in the modern liberal state with its freedom for religion and, in a manner, from religion. But this solution supplied by the modern liberal state to the millennial problem is not properly understood if one does not understand the problem in its original form in the first place. In the case of Socrates or Plato, the conflict in question was solved in a manner in Plato's *Laws*. The last word of the *Apology* is "god," the first word of the *Laws* is "god." The city of the *Laws*[iv] described by Plato in the *Laws* requires a recognition of the cosmic gods, whose being can be demonstrated as distinguished from the Olympian gods, whose being is known only by tradition. And this distinction between the cosmic and the Olympian gods is connected ultimately with the distinction between what is good and what is ancestral, the ordinary premise being [that] the good is identical with the ancestral. But a little bit [of] reflection suffices to show that this equation is not valid although it is mostly and wisely acted upon by human beings. And yet, as Aristotle in his wisdom put it, we seek not the ancestral but the good, and [20]we accept the ancestral only because we believe the ancestral is the good. Yet does the polis of the city of the *Laws* bring about a true solution of the conflict between philosophy and the city? Is the city of the *Laws* truly a society according to reason, according to nature? Now the city of the *Laws* is meant to be the second best or third best solution based on a deviation from what is simply just. Aristotle in the Second Book of the *Politics* criticizes the solution suggested by Plato in the *Laws* because of the fact that in that city privileges are given to the wealthy as wealthy—a plutocratic or oligarchic regime, or rather

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[ii] *Memorabilia* I. 1.10-20 (impiety charge), I. 2.1-61 (corruption charge).
[iii] That is, Alcibiades or Critias.
[iv] Magnesia.

oligarchic. And therefore of course it is based on a deviation from what is simply just. Wealth as wealth does not give a title to higher right, according to reason as well as to the classics.

The best city according to Plato is that sketched in the *Republic*, where the moneymakers on all levels do not in any way participate in ruling. The two ruling classes, the soldiers and the rulers proper, are propertyless and in no way concerned with acquisition. The rulers strictly speaking are the philosophers, and therefore this seems to be elementary: there cannot possibly be a conflict between philosophy and the city because there they write their own tickets, to use a simple but intelligible expression. Nevertheless, there is a conflict between the best city and justice even in the *Republic*, and this means ultimately a conflict between the best city and philosophy. *Republic* 427d: the foundation of the city is completed. Socrates says: Let us now see where in the city is justice and injustice. So in that perfect city there is some injustice. Now where is injustice? In the first place, where is the justice? The justice[21] results primarily in the fact that everyone is given the job for which he is by nature fit, without any regard to his descent or even sex. Hence the ruling class are the best men, the rulers proper. The second best are the helpers of the rulers, [the] soldiers, and the merely ruled are the least good. And no one, that is Plato's contention, can complain about injustice if he gets what he deserves, for what he is fit by nature. But this wonderful arrangement, which is so attractive to every lover of justice, requires the abolition of the family, because otherwise you cannot be sure that there will not be considerations of nepotism in one way or the other coming in. The children must not come to know their parents and thus become attached to them and vice versa, because otherwise, if the parents are upper-class people they couldn't stand that their non-gifted kids should become low-class people. In the other case there might be other difficulties, so everyone is assigned to that class of people for which he is fit. This comes into conflict with his other requirement that no one must know his parents, and therefore what you get at the end of this argument is hereditary castes based on the legal assumption that good parents generate good children and bad parents generate bad children. This is good enough as legal presumptions go, but one must also say it is a severe infraction of the principle of justice. And therefore, to say nothing of other things, the perfect regime of the *Republic* is not unqualifiedly just: there is a conflict between justice and the best city; and I cannot elaborate this now: the only way of getting a perfectly just solution is that of a certain kind of private life, the life of the philosopher. That's at least what the *Republic* suggests.

Now let us consider the relevance of this consideration for Plato's *Apology of Socrates* 29b5 to 7, where Socrates suggests [that] what counts is not doing injustice in contradistinction of suffering injustice. Whether you suffer injustice, that is irrelevant; that does not do any harm to your soul, but whereas doing injustice does. But this is however not so easy, considering man and his complexity. And therefore we find another statement later on, in 30b2 to 4: "Virtue does not arise out of money, but out of virtue does money and the other [good] things arise to men"[v]—a sentence which in the original is somewhat ambiguous, but it implied surely this meaning which I stated, clearly. So in other words,[22] we don't have to worry about suffering harm, suffering injustice. If you are a good man, you will get all good things in addition to your justice and goodness. Differently stated: Is any man free from doing injustice and, in particular, is Socrates

[v] Presumably Strauss's translation.

free from doing injustice? Or to use for one moment the biblical expression: Is any man free from sinning? On the basis of the Bible we would of course answer: No, there is no one who doesn't sin.[vi] But what is the Platonic answer? According to Plato, only the idea of justice is perfectly just; everything else which is just—human beings, institutions, laws—are not perfectly just [LS taps on the table for emphasis] and cannot be perfectly just. In other words, they can't help sinning. At the end of the *Phaedo*, when a man looks back to Socrates after having described[23] his death, he says [of] Socrates (I have it here): "this was the end of our comrade, of a man as we would say, in his generation, he was in his generation the best and otherwise the most sensible and most just."[vii] Well, "in his generation": he doesn't say "simply." More precisely,[24] you remember Socrates's or you know of Socrates's severe condemnation of Pericles and the other outstanding Athenian statesmen. He is wholly unimpressed by the splendor of Periclean Athens. Even here in the *Apology* we find that in 29d7 to 8 when he says: "You Athenian, citizen of the greatest city and the most renowned in regard to wisdom and strength" (29d8-29d10). So Socrates is a severe critic of the Periclean Athens, but does he not belong to that very Athens? Does he not in a manner profit from that injustice which went into the making of Periclean Athens? Is it an accident that philosophy came to Athens or emerged in Athens after the victory in the Persian War and the emergence of the Athenian Empire? Some of you will have read Thucydides' analysis of the fatality involved in this development and in particular of the injustice inevitably going with that. Was Plato or Socrates wholly unaware of it? The passage in the *Republic* to which I referred (427d) alone would prove that this was not the case: even in the best city there will be some injustice.

Now what is the root of men's doing injustice? We can say, and that is not merely Hobbes but also Plato, the concern with self-preservation. In order to preserve yourself, to preserve your life, you are in need of means of self-preservation. And these are guns, knives, but also that you belong to a group of people who will come to your defense. The general word, too familiar to the political science students, is power: no self-preservation without power. Now regardless of whether one does these things oneself and for oneself, or whether one profits, however indirectly, from one's city doing them does from a strict point of view make no difference. You can be nice and always decent and never cheat, never rob—but you may very well be a beneficiary of your society having done that, and that is, morally speaking, in the last analysis no great difference.[25] Therefore then this question of the conflict between justice and the city, and therefore ultimately between philosophy and the city, remains.

We are now at present studying the last part of Socrates's defense proper, which starts in 28b3 following. This is the first section of the *Apology*, the purport of which is not clear. Socrates begins that part by taking issue with the low-class view regarding death, namely, that[26] one must avoid dying by all means. He refers there to Achilles as if Achilles were Socrates's model, and he then gradually leads to a new presentation of his *pragma*, of his business, which he still traces to the god. He speaks no longer of his examining those Athenians whom he thinks to be wise with regard to their wisdom, [27]he speaks now of his examining *all* Athenians with a view to their virtue and of his urging them forward toward virtue. He presents himself here as a gadfly sent to

[vi] Cf. 1 Kings 8:46
[vii] *Phaedo* 118a16-17. Presumably Strauss's translation.

the city of Athens by the god, presumably by Apollo because he had spoken of no other god. And here we find this extraordinary statement: that he awakens, and persuades, and scolds "each one of you," unceasingly the whole day, stinging him everywhere on every part of his body (you remember that) and then he goes on to say—do you have the passage there? Next sentence.

Mr. Reinken: Yes. Page 113 in yours. "Such another is not likely to come to you, gentlemen; but if you take my advice, you will spare me. But you, perhaps, might be angry, like people awakened from a nap." (31a3-31a6)

LS: Ya, and so on, and then they would of course try to slap that gadfly, i.e., kill Socrates. It is very important.[28] "You might perhaps be angry." Perhaps. The grammatical construction is a bit complicated. There are two Greek words for "perhaps" here, with different[29] [connotations], but it is clear that he means "perhaps you will become angry." This activity as a gadfly, as distinguished from his examining the allegedly wise men, did not necessarily lead to Socrates's becoming hated, whereas examining the men with a view to their wisdom did; and this shows most clearly that these are two very different aspects of Socrates's activity. Socrates's protreptic activity did not make him hated, it did not endanger his life, but it had a bad consequence. Will you read that again, where we left off?

Mr. Reinken: You might awaken from a nap "and might swat[viii] me, as Anytus advises, and easily kill me; then you would pass the rest of your lives in slumber, unless God, in his care for you, should send someone else to sting you." (31a6-31a10)

LS: Ya, but one should always say "the god" and write it with a small "g" because there is always the possibility that he means the god in Delphi[30] in contradistinction to other gods. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "And that I am, as I say, a kind of gift from the god, you might understand from this; for I have neglected all my own affairs and have been enduring the neglect of my concerns all these years, but I am always busy in your interest,[31] coming to each one of you individually like a father or an elder brother and urging you to care for virtue." (31a10-31b6)

LS: Now, "doing always *your* business" in contradistinction to[32] minding always your business, i.e., never minding my own business, ya—as you understand what this allusion means, at least those of you who have read the *Republic*. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> Now that is not like human conduct. If I derived any profit from this and received pay for these exhortations, there would be some sense in it; but now you yourselves see that my accusers, though they accuse me of everything else in such a shameless way, have not been able to work themselves up to such a pitch of shamelessness as to produce a witness or[ix] to testify that I ever exacted or asked pay of anyone. For I think I have a sufficient witness that I speak the truth, namely, my poverty. (316-31c4)

[viii] In original: "slap"

[ix] "Or" is not in the original.

LS: So in other words, his urging the Athenians to be virtuous, what I call the Uncle Sam thing, buttonhole—pointing at him, buttonholing him: Did you do a good deed today?—this[33] did not bring Socrates's life in danger; it made him obnoxious to some extent [laughter], naturally, but it did not bring him danger. Its bad consequence is merely [34]Socrates's poverty, not danger to his life. So[35] we are now in a position to understand the next section. Will you read on?

Mr. Reinken: "Perhaps it may seem strange that I go about and interfere in other people's affairs to give this advice in private, but do not venture to come before your assembly and advise the city.[x]" (31c4-31c7)

LS: Ya, let, ya—"do not dare," to make it quite clear. Now Socrates has dedicated his life, I add from a certain moment on, altogether to his fellow citizens. He has been a busybody, of course, which is a word which he uses here. All the more striking is then the fact that he never dared to engage in political activity. I mean, what is the difference between minding everybody else's business and minding the business of the whole community? Good. Now go on.

Mr. Reinken: "But the reason for this, as you have heard me say at many times and places, is that something divine and spiritual comes—" (31c7-31c9)

LS: You know, let us say "demonic."

Mr. Reinken: "Some demonic thing."

LS: Comma—"a voice," comma.

Mr. Reinken: "that some demonic thing[xi] comes to me, the very thing which Meletus ridiculed in his indictment. I have had—" (31c9-31d2)

LS: [36]But in the original, which has been struck out by some editors, "something divine, demonic, comma, a voice." You should leave that. Socrates explains his abstention from political life by another story, but this time by a story which he has told in many places and which his judges have heard many times: the story of something divine and demonic, namely, a voice. This well-known experience of Socrates is the only possibly true basis of Meletus's charge, that is implied. Everyone has heard that Socrates claims to have such a demonic thing, but no one else has it, and therefore that is a new demonic thing. And therefore he believes in that demonic thing and not in the gods of the city. As a well-known story, this story differs from the story which was new to the audience of the Delphic oracle. Therefore Socrates had to tell the . . . again. Now he gives a closer description of that.

Mr. Reinken: "I have had this from my childhood; it is a sort of voice that—" (31d2-31d3)

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[x] In original: "the state"
[xi] In original: "something divine and spiritual"

LS: Ya. Let us stop here. That's another difference between that *daimonion*—I will now use this word; it is not easily translatable in English unless you, in this awkward way that we would speak of this demonic thing. Another difference between the *daimonion* and the Delphic oracle: the *daimonion* goes back to Socrates's childhood; he never claimed[37] that the oracle and the divine mission proceeding from the oracle goes back to his childhood. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "that comes to me, and when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward." (31d3-31d5)

LS: Yes. So that is still another difference: whereas the oracle of Delphi, as interpreted by Socrates, manifestly urges him forward, the *daimonion* only holds him back. And there is another point here implied, another difference between the two things: the *daimonion* is not traced to a god. It must have some connection with the world of the divine, otherwise he couldn't call it demonic; but it's not directly traced to that. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward. This it is which opposes my engaging in politics. And I think this opposition is a very good thing; for you may be quite sure, men of Athens—" (31d4-31d8)

LS: In other words, it is not only something which is an irresistible suggestion, but it is also reasonable. "Come to think of it," Socrates says, "this *daimonion* is rational or to obey it at least is a rational thing." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "that if I had undertaken to go into politics, I should have been put to death long ago and should have done no good to you or to myself." (31d8-31e2)

LS: He doesn't say "[38]I would have perished." The words "death" and "dying" most definitely are avoided in this section. Say "perished."

Mr. Reinken: "I would[xii] have perished[xiii] long ago and should have done no good to you or to myself. And do not be angry with me for speaking the truth; the fact is that no man will save his life who nobly opposes you or any other populace and prevents many unjust and illegal things from happening in the city.[xiv] A man who really fights for the right, if he is to preserve his life for even a little while, must be a private citizen, not a political[xv] man." (31d9-32a4)

LS: Yes, all right. Now in this particular case at any rate, Socrates understood the reasonableness of that voice: by holding him back from politics, it held him back from destruction. I said he avoids here the words death and dying, not without reason. Now this is the fifth, and last, and most interesting difference between the *daimonion* and the Delphic oracle. The Delphic oracle, we recall, as Socrates understood it led him on to examine everyone thought to be wise and

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[xii] In original: "should"
[xiii] In original: "been put to death"
[xiv] In original: "the state"
[xv] In original: "public"

therefore made him hated and endangered his life. The *daimonion* preserves his life. If he had gone into politics while he was already old, politics would not have been more harmful to him than his examining and admonishing all individual Athenians. When he says: If I had undertaken a long time ago to be politically active, then I would have perished a long time ago, one could raise the question: Why could he not have gone rather, say, a few years ago into politics? Establish a parallel because presumably the Delphic oracle was also not a matter of many years ago, but only of a few years ago. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: For instance, does the qualification "long ago" occur in both clauses?

LS: Both? Yes, yes, yes, and people[39] have been worried. And one famous phonologist of the last century, Courbet, has deleted one of them. They like to have the text smooth[40], but perhaps Plato didn't like to have the text smooth. So[41] Burnet keeps the two from on longer years, many years. Yes?

Student: Would it possibly happen that the *daimōn* would pass judgment on the oracle at some point on Socrates life? In other words, if there is such a contrast between the two, wouldn't it happen that there would be a conflict between the two?

LS: Yes. Well, surely that seems to be the case by implication it seems to be so, the oracle pushes him toward death and the *daimonion* pushes him toward life, ya? That's what you mean. Yes, that's it. But let us first follow it a bit more closely. There was no reason why Socrates should go into politics only when [he was] already old, because if this is a decent thing to do then he should do it as soon as possible, because going into politics depended entirely on Socrates's own decision, whereas as for his chief activity of which he had spoken so long, he had to wait for the oracle of course. And prior to the oracle, he didn't have any inducement to examine all the Athenians. The *daimonion* did not obstruct Socrates's obeying the Delphic oracle [42]or, if it did, Socrates didn't pay any attention to it. But perhaps it did not obstruct it because at that time it was no longer necessary or good for Socrates to live. That's a possible explanation. At any rate, and that was the point which you raised, the essential effect of the daimonion is the opposite of the essential effect of the Delphic oracle. By respecting and paying attention to the *daimonion*, Socrates accepts within limits the view of that lout, or Mack,[43] which is the view which he had rejected unqualifiedly, you will remember, at the beginning of this part of the *Apology*. And there he had rejected it with a view to the model of Achilles, who did not care about death. Now he comes to agree with a view held by Achilles in Hades, when he was already in Hades, at least as reported by Odysseus.[44][xvi] There is a concern; the concern with self-preservation is justified.

Now what is that *daimonion*? There is an enormous literature on the subject. I gave you some specimens of that at the beginning of this course: what Hegel says about it in his *History of Philosophy*.[xvii] I will not go so far back now and only read to you a few statements of Burnet on *Euthyphron* 3b5 and 6: "Socrates is always represented by Plato (though not of course by Xenophon)." "Of course" means here Xenophon, this retired colonel, who did not understand

[xvi] Homer, *Odyssey* XI: 489-491.
[xvii] G. W. F. Hegel, "Socrates," in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

anything of the higher things. "Socrates is always represented by Plato as speaking quite lightly, and even ironically, of the quote 'divine sign'." (This is his translation of *daimonion*.)

> It belonged to the 'irrational part' of his soul, even more than dreams, which sometimes did give positive instructions as the 'divine sign' never did. That being so, it is obviously futile to rationalize it. We must simply accept the fact that it was a perfectly real experience to Socrates, though not apparently of paramount importance. It served to justify certain instinctive reluctances of which he was unable to give a clear account to himself. But he believed in it all the same, and actually heard the 'voice'. Nearly all the recorded instances of the 'divine sign' occurred on indifferent, and even trivial, occasions, and only inhibited acts which would have unfortunate consequences. [Well, if the consequences are very unfortunate, the occasions are not too trivial, I would say—LS] Socrates never appeals to it on questions of serious moment involving considerations of right and wrong. In particular, the 'sign' is not represented as having anything to do with the mission to his fellow-citizens with which he believed he had been charged by God. It has nothing in common, then, with 'Conscience.' (Burnet 1964, 96-97)

Now this latter point, I think it is important to make [it] because quite a few people have identified the *daimonion* with conscience. The word conscience in Greek, *syneidesis*, does not occur in Plato. Burnet says there is something instinctive in the *daimonion*. This is, I think, the most valuable of his remarks. Now we have seen something about instinctive activities in our very *Apology*. Does anyone of you remember it? And he speaks there also of the seers, ya, and how does he call it there, in 22b8 to c1? How does he call it there?

Student: "Certain nature."

LS: Ya, certain kind of nature: *physis tis*. This[45] would be a much better lead than "quote conscience." Something natural.

Now I'll read to you a passage from a dialogue which is now generally—not to say universally, because after all [LS chuckles], I do not believe it [laughter]—regarded as spurious, the dialogue called *Theages*. [LS writes on the blackboard] A former student of mine, Seth Benardete, has written his master's thesis on the *Theages* as a student at the Committee on Social Thought. Those of you who are interested might read, might have a look at this thesis. Now let me see. I don't remember having it out. Ya, I will here only read to you a few very significant passages. The situation is briefly this: a man from upstate, as you might say in this country [laughter] comes to Athens with his son, Theages, and[46] the son is very eager to become a pupil of Socrates. And the father is a man who has had many high military and other offices, and he wants to[47] [give] his son the best education. And then Socrates asks him: Well, what do you wish to learn? And[48] finally: What do you wish to become? And he proves to wish to become a tyrant [laughter], and that is the reason why he wants to go to school. So that is a[n] amusing, and not quite merely amusing, beginning. Now, and then Socrates declines and says: I don't know. I can't help you or your son Theages.

> Your zeal is no wonder to me [Socrates says—LS] if you suppose that I especially could be of use to your boy. For I know of nothing for which a sensible man could be more zealous than[49] for his own son's utmost improvement. But how [is it] you came to form this opinion that I would be better able to be of use to your son in his aim of becoming a good citizen [LS chuckles], than you would yourself? And how he came to suppose that I rather than yourself would be of use to him, this does fill me with wonder. For you in the first place are my elder, and further, you have held in your time many of the highest offices in Athens and are respected by the people of your tribe far above all your fellow townsmen and by the whole city as much as any man, whereas neither of you can notice anything like this about me. And moreover, if Theages here does despise the instruction of our statesmen and is looking for some other persons who profess to be able to educate you young people, we have here Prodicus, Gorgias, and so on, the famous sophists and many more who are so wise that they go throughout cities and persuade the noblest and wealthiest of your young men to abandon that instruction and learn from them with a deposit, besides, of a large sum of money as their fee and to feel thankful in addition. Some of these persons might naturally have been chosen both by your son and by yourself in preference to me. For I have no knowledge of these fair and beatific subjects of study, I only wish that I had. But what I always say you know is that I am in the position of knowing practically nothing, except one little subject, erotic matters.[xviii]

[Laughter] Your reaction is good—that is exactly the way in which Demodocus and Theages react. That's fantastic; this old man with a beard [laughter] who[50] [is] in no way a playboy, claims to be a specialist only in eroticism. [Laughter]

So now of course this is not the only occasion on which Socrates speaks of his eroticism. But, for example, at the beginning of the *Protagoras*, Socrates introduces himself and is introduced, as a matter of fact, as a man who is the talk of the town because he is in love with Alcibiades, the most beautiful of the young Athenians. He is notorious for his *erōs* for handsome youth. Now this must not be taken too literally. It is also based on something like a presumption, although not a legal presumption in this case, namely, that gifted youth will also be handsome youth. That is not necessarily the case because in the *Theaetetus*, for example, a very gifted youth, a mathematician, Theaetetus, is very ugly; he looks as ugly as Socrates himself.[xix] [Laughter] And yet in a way Socrates is in love with him. So now[51] some of you will know the account[52] which Alcibiades, completely drunk, gives at the end of the *Banquet* of his love affair with Socrates.[xx] Therefore they laugh about this, that the only thing which he [Socrates] knows is eroticism. What does he do? Now[53] the explanation which he gave [of] why he could not take on Theages as a young companion, namely, that he knows nothing, he is only an eroticist and that is not the good way to become a tyrant [laughter]—so he must give him another story, a substitute story, and that perhaps is in the sequel. "There is something by a divine allotment, [a] *daimonion*, which has accompanied [me] from my childhood up. It is a voice and when it occurs always indicates to me a prohibition of something I may be about to do, but never urges me on to anything. And if

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[xviii] *Theages* 127d2-128b4. Presumably Strauss's translation.
[xix] *Theaetetus* 144d7-144e4.
[xx] *Symposium* 215d6-222a6.

one of my friends consults me and the voice occurs, the same thing happens. It prohibits and does not allow me to act. And I will produce witnesses to convince you of these facts."[xxi] And then he gives a long list of terrific stories, how people were ruined who did not listen to Socrates's *daimonion*; and the fantastic character of these stories—taken from Twilight or reminding of Twilight, if you know the series over the TV—is one reason why this dialogue is regarded as spurious.[xxii] People do not consider the fact that this is a dialogue which Socrates has with two people from upstate, you know, and[54] he had to use stronger . . . [language] than when he talked to the city slickers to whom he ordinarily talked.

Now. But to come back to the main point: these stories, if you have the time to read[55] [them] you will be greatly amused by them, but the main point for and important for our immediate context, is this: Socrates has first declined to teach or to converse with Theages because Socrates is only an erotic man. And then he says: I can't take you on because my *daimonion* prevents me from doing it. The result is the same. He won't take on Theages, and it is a relatively polite way of saying: You are not good enough for this purpose. But the main point: the eroticism of Socrates is replaced here by his *daimonion*. And now I appeal again to a general rule: if a subject is without any further discussion replaced by another in Plato, it means it is replaceable by it, that the two things are the same. Socrates's *erōs* is the same as his *daimonion*.

Aristotle, in his short treatise *On Divination by Dreams*, chapter 2, beginning, says "the nature of the other animals,"[56] animals other than men, "is demonic, but not divine." Hence[57] the other animals dream. Everyone has seen dogs dream. But "hence dreams are not godsent, but they are demonic. For nature is demonic, but not divine."[xxiii] Divine is only the *nous*, intelligence, and nature works without intelligence—instinctively, as we say. In a word, I think that the *daimonion* of which Socrates speaks is the natural inclination of the most gifted man Plato knew. Socrates is the born philosopher from Plato's point of view, much more than any other man, and therefore all these funny features which Socrates has—the nose, the eyes, you know? and all these other funny things which he has, including Xanthippe—this all is meaningful and fits, belongs to his . . . philosopher. That is at least my interpretation of Socrates's *daimonion*. But you are quite right [in] what you said. The function of the *daimonion* is opposed, the effect of the *daimonion* is opposed to that of the Delphic oracle. The *daimonion* is concerned with Socrates's preservation, at least up to a certain moment, and the Delphic oracle drives him, pushes him into danger. Let us re-read the last few lines of the passage we have now read.

Mr. Reinken: "And do—" (31e2)

LS: "But it is necessary for him who truly fights—"

Mr. Reinken: "fights for the right[58], if he is to preserve his life for even a little while, that he be a private citizen, not a public man" (32a2-32a4).

[xxi] *Theages* 128d. Strauss's translation.
[xxii] The Twilight Zone was a television series created by Rod Serling; it aired from 1959 to 1964.
[xxiii] Aristotle, *On Divination by Dreams*, part 2.

LS: [59]Truly, to fight for justice requires then that one abstains from such [a]fight for justice, because that fight would lead him only to death. At least it requires that one lead a private life which is relatively safe. This loutish consideration is now dropped here. And so we see that this section of the *Apology* which seems to have no structure does have a structure. I'll read to you a passage from Plato's *Republic*. Well, maybe our friend Reinken will do it. Begin here.

Mr. Reinken: 496a. "'There is a very small remnant, then, Adeimantus,' I said, 'of those who consort worthily with philosophy, some wellborn and well-bred nature, it may be, held in check by exile, and so in the absence of corrupters remaining true to philosophy, as its quality bids, or—" (496a10-496b5).

LS: In other words, how come that while there are quite a few men born fit for philosophizing, there are only a few of them [who are] actually philosophers. What is the obstacle, then? Ya?

Mr. Reinken: "or it may happen that a great soul born in a little town scorns and disregards its parochial affairs; and a small group perhaps might by natural affinity be drawn to it from other arts which they justly disdain; and the bridle of our companion Theages—" (496b5-496b10)

LS: That's the same Theages.

Mr. Reinken:

> also might operate as a restraint. For in the case of Theages all other conditions were at hand for his backsliding from philosophy, but his sickly habit of body keeping him out of politics holds him back. My own case, the daimonion[xxiv], is hardly worth mentioning—for I suppose it has happened to few or none before me. And those who have been of this little company and have tasted the sweetness and blessedness of this possession and who have also come to understand the madness of the multitude sufficiently and have seen that there is nothing, if I may say so, sound or right in any politics, and that there is no ally with whose aid the champion of justice could escape destruction, but that he would be as a man who has fallen among wild beasts, unwilling to share their misdeeds and unable to hold out singly against the savagery of all, and that he would thus, before he could in any way benefit his friends or the city[xxv] come to an untimely end without doing any good to himself or others,—for all these reasons I say the philosopher remains quiet, minds his own affair, and, as it were, standing aside under shelter of a wall in a storm and blast of dust and sleet and seeing others filled full of lawlessness, is content if in any way he may keep himself free from iniquity and unholy deeds through this life and take his departure with fair hope, serene and well content when the end comes. (496b10-496e4)

[xxiv] In original: "divine sign"
[xxv] In original: "state"

LS: Thank you. Yes, you see that the consideration of safety is also here mentioned: a very striking parallel. Yes. Now is there any point you would like to discuss regarding the daimonion? Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: I didn't understand the remark you made earlier about the significance of the ugly things.[60] You mentioned the meaningfulness of Xanthippe.

LS: Ya. No, everything fits together. Ya, that is the hypothesis in the old rhetorical sense of the word hypothesis, on which the work of Plato and also Xenophon is based: that these are not merely funny idiosyncrasies but that they are connected with the very substance of Socrates.

Mr. Schaefer: In other words, is the connection there that Socrates's *erōs* is connected to other things than—

LS: Yes,[61] in other words his erōs is not[62] the body, but the soul. Yes?

Student: If the *daimonion* is[63] a natural thing and not divine, how does that go together with Socrates's argument that if he believes in demonic things, then he believes in gods?

LS: Ya, but still, demons would nevertheless be lower than gods. In Plato's *Banquet* there is a discussion, and the characteristic thesis of Socrates regarding Eros is [that] he is not a god but lower than the gods, namely, a demon. A demon is[64] a being lower than a god. Eros being desire for something and hence longing for something and [is] therefore based on a lack, on a defect, whereas a god is supposed to be a perfect being which does not lack anything. There is no—yes?

Same student: Does that then mean that nature is a lower divine being?

LS: Nature—ya, because of the lack of *nous*, the instinctiveness. If a tree or an animal grows, or any other natural activity, this is not intellectual; it is a striving for something which is very meaningful for preservation—for preservation of the species, for perfection, growth, and so on, and yet it is not a conscious striving for bringing these things about. This is what nature, I mean used in contradistinction to *nous*, means.

Same student: But does it mean that he's partly divine or that he's against the divine?

LS: Well,[65] without going into the complicated thing, I would say nature is a part of the whole, the highest part of which is the divine proper, intelligence, which you find in men and which perhaps you find also according to Plato and Aristotle in the whole heavenly order and so on, but not in the natural things proper. They long for something which they can never reach, and this gives them their peculiar charm as well as their peculiar melancholy: that they never can be redeemed, as it were, from that non-intellectual character which their whole life has. Read this chapter in Aristotle to which I refer. That is I think the clearest statement—to which one could easily object, of course, that this [is] Aristotle and not Plato. I quite agree with that, but the question is whether a remark of Aristotle is not more helpful for understanding a very enigmatic Platonic utterance than any other man's statement. So let us go on where we left off, 32a4.

Mr. Reinken: "I will give you powerful proofs of this, not mere words, but what you honor more,—actions." (32a4-32a5)

LS: Period. Now that is not well translated: "not speeches, but what *you* honor," you underlined, "deeds." Socrates honors speeches *more* than deeds. This "not speeches" may of course also refer to that voice, in opposition to the voice. Deeds: not a voice, something audible, but deeds. That is a remark of Burnet which I thought we could consider: "Socrates proceeds to give two instances in which he had opposed the government of the day, regardless of the consequences to himself. There is nothing about the 'divine sign' here" in this section. "It was not that, but his own judgment of what was lawful and just[xxvi] which guided him." (Burnet 1964, 210) I would say, very well. The *daimonion* would have opposed these actions of Socrates because they brought him into mortal danger, as we will see.

Mr. Reinken: "And listen to what happened to me, that you may be convinced that I would never yield to any one, if that was wrong, through fear of death, but would die rather than yield. The tale I am going to tell you is ordinary and commonplace, but true." (32a5-32a10)

LS: Yes. So now Socrates is going to prove that despite his daimonion, he exposed his life when it was his duty to do so. That's the meaning of these stories. Now let us read the first one.

Mr. Reinken:

> I, men of Athens, never held any other office in the city[xxvii], but I was a senator; and it happened that my tribe held the presidency when you wished to judge collectively, not severally, the ten generals who had failed to gather up the slain after the naval battle; this was illegal, as you all agreed afterwards. At that time I was the only one among of the prytanes who opposed doing anything contrary to the laws, and although the orators were ready to impeach and arrest me, and though you urged them with shouts to do so, I thought I must run the risk to the end with law and justice on my side, rather than join with you when your wishes were unjust, through fear of imprisonment or death. (32a10-32c4)

LS: Yes. Now Socrates does not say that this story is known to the audience or to all, whereas Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*, [at] the end of chapter 1, says that that is Xenophon's key proof of Socrates's piety: this conduct at the trial of the generals from the Battle of Arginusae. Now this incident happened in 406, that is to say not so long ago, seven years ago. Perhaps Socrates's action did not make the great impression on all and therefore Socrates has to mention it. He says here in c2: "You, my judges, are the same who acted illegally against the ten generals and myself, so you are nice defenders of justice; you crossly disregarded the law." There is a remark from Burnet on 32b2. Ya, well, it's not important. So here Socrates says: Look, this shows clearly[66] the immediate context; this shows clearly what it means to go into politics and to try to be just in politics.[67] I did it once, on the only occasion when I had any participation in

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[xxvi] In original: "right"
[xxvii] In original: "state"

government proper, and I was the only one who took the side of right and I came into mortal danger. And now, the second example.

Mr. Reinken:

> That was when the democracy still existed; and after the oligarchy was established, the Thirty sent for me with four others to come to the rotunda and ordered us to bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis to be put to death. They gave many such orders to others also, because they wished to implicate as many in their crimes as they could. Then I, however, showed again, by action, not in word only. (32c4-32d2)

LS: No, not by speech, but by deed. It's the same opposition he used at the beginning of this section because it is very easy to speak justly, as distinguished from acting justly. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> Not by speech[xxviii], that I did not care a whit for death if that be not too rude an expression, but that I did care with all my might not to do anything unjust or unholy. For that government, with all its power, did not frighten me into doing anything unjust, but when we came out of the rotunda, the other four went to Salamis and arrested Leon, but I simply went home; and perhaps I should have been put to death for it, if the government had not quickly been put down. Of these facts you can have many witnesses. (32d2-32e2)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Now Socrates refers again to the dangers arising from the changes of regimes by speaking of the fact that first there was a democracy, and then there came an oligarchy. This was about four years before the trial. And therewith he refers to the dangers coming from the variety of regimes; the mere variety shows that there is a possibility of preferring a regime other than the established one, [preferring a regime] *to* the established one. And that is of course a high crime, at least to the extent[68] [that] one acts upon it. But in passionate times a mere sympathy for the nonestablished regime is a grave thing. Socrates was not fully loyal to the democracy because he didn't believe in it—we know that, and he didn't deny that, if full loyalty means to be persuaded hundred percent that it is the best regime. He was not.[69] He refers at the end of this passage to "many witnesses." The availability of many witnesses proves the need for witnesses. The two political deeds of Socrates are not a matter of common knowledge, and therefore the need for witnesses.

Now the democracy was then restored at the time of the trial. Socrates—you see his amazing impartiality. He gives one example of a gross injustice of the democracy and one example of the gross injustice of the oligarchy without passing any value judgments on the two, which was also a very courageous political act. In particular, Socrates doesn't claim that he contributed in any way by deed or speech to the overthrow of the oligarchy, whereas his comrade Chaerephon, who was in the democratic camp, was exiled during these nine or so months while the oligarchy was established. This question of the oligarchy and Socrates's conduct under it is discussed at some length by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*, Book 1, chapter 1, paragraph 32 following: "When the Thirty"—the thirty tyrants, generally called the Thirty because the government proper, the

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[xxviii] In original: "in word only"

executive, consisted of thirty [men]—"when the Thirty killed many of the citizens, and not the most inferior ones, and urged many on toward unjust acts, Socrates said somewhere that it seemed to him to be strange if someone who has become a herd[sman] of cows would make the cows lesser and worse and would not therewith admit that he is a bad cowherd."[xxix] And the same, and so on. Socrates says it "somewhere"; he did not say it to the tyrants, to the Thirty. In other words, Socrates did not (and the sequel shows it) do anything[70] for their destruction, whereas the claim to respectability of men like Anytus was that they had brought about the restoration of the democracy and stood up against these people. That is doubtless[71] part of the reason why Socrates was unpopular in Athens. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Do you believe that I could have lived so many years if I had been in public life and had acted as a good man should act, lending my aid to what is just and considering that of the highest importance?" (32e3-32e6)

LS: Now that a very remarkable statement, isn't it? Apart from these two cases, in seventy years (Socrates was about seventy years old) Socrates did not defend the right or act in a manner worthy of a good man. That is quite remarkable, because it is very bold. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Far from it, men of Athens; nor could any other man. But you will find that through all my life, both in public, if I engaged in any public activity, and in private, I have—" (32e7-33a2)

LS: You see this "if" sentence—it's very interesting. *If* I[72] engaged in any political action. Well, twice he did. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "and in private, I have always been the same as now, and have never yielded to anyone wrongly, whether it were any other person or any of those who are said by my traducers to be my pupils." (33a2-33a6.

LS: Ya, let us stop. Socrates makes now quite clear that he did not do much politically, on the political plane, and he thus prepares, as we will see, his return from his excursus on his political activity (a very short one) to what he did in a private capacity. Now the last remark just read by Mr. Reinken, the reference to "those whom they say to be my pupils," that is a very—at that time [a] perfectly intelligible reference to Alcibiades and Critias, of course, these terrible playboys who were connected with Socrates.[73] But that is the only reference, only hint at this unsavory connection. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "But I was never any one's teacher. If any one, whether young or old, wishes to hear me speaking and pursing my mission, I have never objected, nor do I converse only when I am paid and not otherwise, but I offer myself alike to rich and poor; I ask questions, and whoever wishes may answer and hear what I say." (33a6-33b4)

[xxix] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I. 1.32. Presumably Strauss's translation.

LS: Ya, now let us stop here. Socrates was never a teacher; I mean, he was never a political man, and he lived a private life. But this private life was not entirely private because otherwise he would not [have] become conspicuous and nothing would have happened to him. So what he did was something in between private and public: he was a teacher. He no longer takes up here the other part of the indictment, the impiety charge, as you see. He permitted others to listen while he minded his own business. The question of course is when he says: Anyone could listen in; but did the poor have as much time to listen to Socrates as the rich? There were no fellowships and foundations at that time. [Laughter] Ya, and also as regards the end of this passage: Is questioning and answering incompatible with teaching?[74] That is not a refutation of the charge that he was teaching. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "And whether any of them turns out well or ill, I should not justly be held responsible, since I never promised or gave any instruction to any of them; but if any man says that he ever learned or heard anything privately from me, which all the others did not, be assured that he is lying.

But why then do some people love to spend much of their time with me?" (33b5-33c1)

LS: Ya, "enjoy . . . ."

Mr. Reinken: "You have heard the reason, men of Athens; for I told you the whole truth; it is because they like to listen when those are examined—" (33c1-33c3)

LS: "They enjoy," again.

Mr. Reinken: "enjoy listening[xxx] when those are examined who think they are wise and are not so; for it is amusing." (33c3-33c5)

LS: No, "is not unpleasant." That is the statement. So we have seen this before. But this is a very simple example of the general rule which I stated some time ago that there is never an *identical* repetition. And here again, if you compare it with the first statement which occurs in 23c2 to 5, you see that the word *chaire*, enjoy, occurs here twice, and not only once. Secondly, at that time he spoke only of the young ones who enjoy it; here is silence about the young ones because, as Socrates denies he is a teacher and a teacher is one surrounded by younger people, and therefore he is one. But the most important thing [is that] he says it is not unpleasant, which means this spectacle is pleasant not only to frivolous wealthy youth but it is in itself pleasant, even for Socrates, because the ridiculous of a certain level,is pleasant for a sensible man. And[75] if a pompous ass[76] who has some good qualities (otherwise it would not be interesting) is debunked, that is doubtless a spectacle which a reasonable man might reasonably enjoy. And Socrates, we must assume, did that.[77] Socrates[78] minding his own business is very pleasant to Socrates and his companions, and this alone would be a sufficient motive for minding his business in this manner.

So we'll leave it at that and I'll discuss the rest next time.

[xxx] In original: "like to listen"

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted “One of you had a question. Who is it? He came to my office.

Q: Oh.

LS: Yes.

[2] Deleted “I—I think you managed to—I said I—.”

[3] Deleted “That—.”

[4] Deleted “he shows”

[5] Deleted “in a—through—.”

[6] Deleted “that he is.”

[7] Deleted “there would—.”

[8] Deleted “Q: Yeah, right.

LS: Because—yeah—

Q: Right—.”

[9] Deleted “what—what does—I mean—.”

[10] Deleted “Let—and meaning.”

[11] Deleted “I believe—.”

[12] Deleted “wished to.”

[13] Deleted “that.”

[14] Deleted “doesn’t become—is not—.”

[15] Deleted “doesn’t. —”

[16] Deleted “—that—that—about—the—doors—about the—.”

[17] Deleted “I say—the reason why—.”

[18] Deleted “the very—.”

[19] Deleted “and this—.”

[20] Deleted “if”

[21] Deleted “is primarily….”

[22] Deleted “there cannot be….”

[23] Deleted “his life—.”

[24] Deleted “Socrates—.”

[25] Deleted “Now so we are….”

[26] Deleted “one has—.”

[27] Deleted “of examining them with a regard to those”

[28] Deleted “The—.”

[29] Deleted “connections.”

[30] Deleted “and not—and not—.”

[31] Deleted “ ‘coming to teach each one of you—.’”

[32] Deleted “doing one’s.”

[33] Deleted “did not make—.”

[34] Deleted “that”

[35] Deleted “now we will be—we—.”

[36] Deleted “Now let us here.”

[37] Deleted “that he had—.”

[38] Deleted “‘have—I would have been….’”

[39] Deleted “yeah, people.”

[40] Deleted “and.”

[41] Deleted “what—I think what—.”

[42] Deleted “at least”

[43] Deleted “and….”

[44] Deleted “That.”

[45] Deleted “is—.”

[46] Deleted “is very eager.”

[47] Deleted “have—have.”

[48] Deleted “it—.”

[49] Deleted “‘for one’s—.’”

[50] Deleted “claims to be…and not—.”

[51] Deleted “this—and if you also—.”

[52] Deleted “which Socrates give—.”

[53] Deleted “he—Socrates—.”

[54] Deleted “they were probably—that they.”

[55] Deleted “it.”

[56] Deleted “other.”

[57] Deleted “and.”

[58] Deleted “(32a 2)

LS: Yes.”

[59] Deleted “So, now let—yeah.”

[60] Deleted “Xanthippe—

LS: I beg your pardon?”

[61] Deleted “you can—.”

[62] Deleted “Yes. Yes. Not.”

[63] Deleted “natural—the.”

[64] Deleted “so—is a lower—.”

[65] Deleted “I think, I mean.”

[66] Deleted “‘what—.’”

[67] Deleted “‘This—.’”

[68] Deleted “if.”

[69] Deleted “There are many—.”

[70] Deleted “to—.”

[71] Deleted “a part of why Socrates was—a.”

[72] Deleted “‘did anything—commit.’”

[73] Deleted “and—yeah—.”

[74] Deleted “you know? It would be—.”

[75] Deleted “and if some—someone—if—.”

[76] Deleted “of a certain—.”

[77] Deleted “This—Socrates is—.”

[78] Deleted “doing.”

Session 8: November 10, 1966

Leo Strauss: Now we have discussed last time the passage in which Socrates speaks of his *daimonion*. I think I can now use the Greek word without making the hopeless attempt to translate it by "demonic thing." Now the most important consideration is that the *daimonion* is radically different from the Delphic oracle. The *daimonion* is concerned with preserving Socrates's life; the Delphic oracle[1] endangers Socrates's life. We have also to consider the place where these two things, the *daimonion* and the Delphic oracle, are spoken of. And not only that they are spoken of in different parts, but also there is a movement [2]from the Delphic oracle to the *daimonion*.

The Delphic oracle is spoken of in the context of the first accusers. In the first place, the first accusers did not say anything about Socrates's impiety. This was merely an inference on the part of the listeners. But contradicting that is the assertion that the first accusers said first only that Socrates corrupts the young and [only] then when asked, as it were, corrupting by doing what? did they speak of his impiety. So here again, one can say Socrates's impiety is an inference on the part of the accusers themselves. A very insincere inference, but nevertheless an inference. Now we also have observed that Socrates changes the wording of the charge.[3] This fact that impiety is presented as a kind of inference justifies Socrates's change of the wording of the official charge, namely, by putting the corruption charge first and the impiety charge in the second place.

Now[4] it is in the context of the discussion of the present accusers, of the late accusers, that he speaks of the *daimonion*. The *daimonion* is presented as a fact admitted by Socrates and generally known, which underlies the charge itself. There was an allusion to that in 31d, as you may recall, that Meletus, treating comically the *daimonion*, had said Socrates introduces new *daimonia*, new demonic things. And Socrates admits now: Well, there is one basis for the charge, and that is my having and speaking of my *daimonion*. Now, what is the *daimonion*? It only holds back; and I tried to show last time that therefore it is only the negative side of the same phenomenon which positively is *erōs*, Socrates's *erōs* for philosophy and potential philosophers, and which of course holds him back from everything else which is not conducive to philosophy and to philosophers.

Now there is a conflict or at least an opposition between the Delphic oracle and the *daimonion*. That is implied in what I said before. But this conflict can be resolved at least verbally in the following way, by the statement made by Socrates before: whoever has the divine good things gets by this very fact all the lower good things. In other words, there is no conflict between philosophizing, or[5] however one might call Socrates's conflict and[6] the Delphic oracle which induced him to engage in philosophizing, and the *daimonion*. Whether this is a true solution remains to be seen. *Erōs* has of course not the narrow meaning now ascribed to what they call sex,[7] although what is now called sex is a part of that phenomenon. *Erōs* is a striving for the beautiful and noble, for something resplendent and charming, and therefore also for beautiful human beings. Therefore it is also concerned with the highest pleasure, because[8] nothing can be fully *kalon*, fully fine, without also being pleasant. Now therefore Socrates's activity, which in

the *Apology* appears only in the form of examining men who are believed to be wise, is, [9]as Socrates says it with a great understatement, is not unpleasant. This was the end of what we discussed last time. Now is there any point you wuld like to raise now? Failing that we will go on.

Student: Is there a difference between an *erōs* for wisdom and what is in the word itself, that is *philia*?

LS: *Philia*. Ya, well, that is—Aristotle says these are two entirely different phenomena, *philia* and *erōs*, and that is a very sober and commonsensical assertion. But[10] Plato never leaves it at the commonsensical distinctions, so to say; Plato always transcends them, goes to their depth or to their highest height, however you might look at them, and there[11] many things coincide. Take this. Plato asks: What is justice? And the ultimate answer to that question is: philosophizing. He raises the question: What is *erōs*? And *erōs*[12] in itself has nothing to do with justice, as you know even from modern novels. Again Plato's answer is [that] *erōs* is, on its highest level,[13] philosophizing. In a shorter writing which today is regarded as spurious, the *Hipparchus*, he even goes so far as to suggest that love of gain—generally regarded as something very low in antiquity—love of gain in its highest sense is philosophizing, because love of gain is of course love of true gain (and not of such dubious gain, you know, where you corner the market and next year you yourself fall into bankruptcy), true gain, stable gain, lasting gain. Again, what else can that be but the truth? *Eros*. So that is the general way of Plato's reasoning.[14] Some people call this a metaphysical way of looking at things, an expression which I would not favor, but still perhaps it helps one or the other of you to look into the deepest depth or the highest height of the phenomena, and there many things prove to be akin and even identical which on the surface are radically distinguished. And therefore also the Platonic doctrine which is more popular, that[15] there is only one virtue ultimately, whereas in Aristotle you have this sober presentation of the various virtues, each by itself, and yet also the assertion they are inseparable, although not identical. Now did I answer your question?

Student: I was wondering whether you were suggesting [that] Socrates is perhaps immoderate[16] in his quest for wisdom.

LS: Immoderate, yes, that is not bad. Only[17] one should replace it by a different word, the Greek word for moderation, *sōphrosynē*, at least that is my ordinary translation—which incidentally does not occur in the *Apology* for various reasons; we would have to dig a bit deeper than we have done hitherto. Now there are two opposites of *sōphrosynē*.[18] *Sōphrosynē* in Aristotle's commonsensical analysis in the *Ethics*[19] means simply self-control regarding the sensual pleasures.[i] And this would have at its opposite dissoluteness.[20] I mean, while very important for practical purposes, [it] is not very important in the highest respect. There is another opposition. *Sōphrosynē*.

Student: Who?

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[i] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1119a10-1119a21.

LS: [LS writes on the blackboard] And that is opposed to two things: *hybris*, which we can translate by insolence or pride; and *mania*, madness, insanity. Now no one will say that Socrates had *hybris*; but what about *mania*, madness? Does this occur in Socratic contexts? Yes?

Student: Yes.

LS: Where? Do you remember?

Student: The story about him at the beginning of the *Symposium* while he's—

LS: Ya, but—

Different student: *Phaedrus*.

LS: *Phaedrus*.[21] Namely, *mania* means the opposite of *sōphrosynē*. Now one can state it without hurting anyone's tender feelings by saying that someone who is moderate in his desire for the truth is not a philosopher. [That] makes sense. Moderation in other respects, for example, regarding speeches, is a virtue; but moderation in one's thinking is not a virtue. On the contrary,[22] and there is of course also a connection between *mania* and *erōs* as appears from the *Phaedrus*, among other things, and as is shown commonsensically in the fact that when people are in love they are not sober, especially in regard to the objects of their love. You know, it is a kind of madness. That has also been said by people other than Plato. Yes. [Laughter] Yes?

Student: In the *Symposium*, doesn't Agathon say that Socrates has *hybris* and that Socrates just comes in, and Agathon says: Come sit by me, and Socrates says: Well, if knowledge flowed from one person in[to] another like water, like [the way] we can make water flow from one vessel in[to] another, then I would be glad to sit by you. But since it doesn't, I'm going to sit over here on the end with somebody else.[23] And Agathon says that Socrates has *hybris*.

LS: [24]Well, this could on the surface mean only that is a kind of joke, ya? Whether Socrates doesn't have a *hybris* of sorts we can[25] discuss later on when we are more advanced in the study of the *Apology*. But at first glance it is safer to speak of the *mania* rather than of *hybris*. Oh, no you wanted to say something.

Student: You spoke last time about the conflict between philosophy and the city, and I asked you before you made those remarks whether there was a necessary conflict, whether the conflict was generally necessary as it's presented in the *Apology*, that is, a deadly serious conflict. You went on to explain that in terms of the *Republic* and the *Laws* there was a disproportion between reason and the city and it seemed to me on reflection that[26] a disproportion is not quite the same thing as a conflict, at least the kind of conflict that we see in the *Apology*.

LS: [27]I mean, if there is such a disproportion, would this not inevitably lead to a conflict[28] under the conditions of antiquity? I mean, there is a given point where two powers raise claims on man's allegiance, and[29] would there not be a conflict caused by this very fact? Well, simply, if

the laws of the city as Socrates and Plato understand them imply a prohibition against philosophy, is then the conflict not inevitable, not necessarily at every point but in principle?

Student: It's inevitable only if the philosopher is compelled to make an appearance in the marketplace, I mean, if he philosophizes in public.

LS: Ya, but then you have to consider the gods of the city. If the philosophers as philosophers do not recognize the gods of the city, and even if they[30] never make popular speeches about that subject,[31] can they not always be denounced?[32] I mean, the prohibition is not against speaking only on the marketplace, denying the gods on the marketplace, but denying the gods simply. And they commit a criminal act by doing this. Whether[33] the law courts act on that or not, that depends on accidental matters: the degree of excitement, you know, and displeasure with the conditions, and so on. That is secondary, but the principle is there.

Same student: But[34] to pursue this point just a bit further, in the *Apology* we see that Socrates has debunked the Athenians in public. This has led to the charge that he has corrupted the youth and to support that charge he had been accused of impiety. Now it seems to me that if he had not debunked the Athenians in public, the chain would have been broken and he would not have been accused of impiety.

LS: Ya, that is the way in which he presents it. But the question is whether that is sufficient. And the decision will depend ultimately on the question: How relevant is the story of the Delphic oracle and what Socrates did on the basis of it? Is this an adequate account of Socrates's life? A question which will be brought up later. We must wait for that. Some—yes?

Mr. Schaefer: In 27c, though, Socrates had used[35] his belief in this daimonic thing as a proof that he believes in spiritual beings. Now does the fact that he uses the word *daimonion* rather than *daimōn*[36] signify that there really is a difference between the spiritual thing that he is talking about and the spiritual things as generally understood?

LS: Ya. Well, "spiritual beings" is an awkward and misleading translation. Let us say demonic things, and he has his demonic things. But the point is that in his discussion with Meletus he doesn't say a word to the effect that he possesses that demonic thing; that he brings out only later, in the passage we discussed last time. And here he argues very simply and crudely: if a man recognizes horsic things he recognizes horses. I mean, how can there be a horseshoe if there are not horses? So if there are demonic things there must be demons. Now what are demons? Either gods—well, then a man who recognizes demonic things recognizes gods, or there are the children of gods and a human parent. In the latter case he recognizes also gods, just as a man who recognizes mules recognizes horses and donkeys. That's a simple argument.

Mr. Schaefer: I'm wondering about the meaning of the daimonic things, not about a proof of his ostensible, the . . . .

LS: [37]Well, that is not in any way explained. We[38] must leave it at what is said about it, and the only explanation which makes sense, especially in the light of the original wording of the

indictment which Socrates transforms, as I have shown, the only historical or factual basis is that Socrates was known to speak of [LS taps the table for emphasis] his demonic thing, and since this demonic thing[39] had nothing to do with the demonic things known to other Athenians, one could rightly say he introduces a new demonic thing; and in order to put this on a broader basis, as all political men would do, say he introduces new demonic things in the plural. That's all one can say about that.[40]

Student: Barker, in his introduction to Aristotle,[ii] commenting on the problems of translating the Greek language,[41] says that [when] we're discussing, when we read law, we think of law in terms of the Romans, the way the Romans thought of law, and that an offense against the law for[42] [the Greeks] was different than an offense against the law for the Romans.[iii] And I wondered if you could comment—

LS: What to say? Ya, I do not know the context. What does Barker say is the difference?[43] I have read that introduction, but a long time ago.

Same student: He went on say that the Greeks[44] didn't set aside a special realm of law as opposed to an offense against society or social relationships—[iv]

LS: Ya, but did the Romans make such a distinction? I mean,[45] did the Latins make such a distinction? Well, I think that is a question. It is possible that in the practice of the lawyers, this may [be so],[46] especially of civil law it may be so; but if you think, for example, that after all emperor-worship was a part of the Roman political order, and therefore not to sacrifice to the Emperor was a crime. And there was only a special allowance made for the Jews—you know, they had this idiosyncrasy that they didn't wish to sacrifice to a mortal[47]; the Emperor was also thought to be mortal, but to someone like the Roman Emperor.

Student: [48]Now when we break a law, we consider ourselves to be attacking the authority structure of the city, and we see that act as attacking the authorities. Did the Greeks see that same act as something more than simply attacking the authority of the city?

LS: [49]That was always kind of more or less noticeable of the holy background, if you mean that, of a holy background. But that was also true in Rome. I mean, later on in the imperial period, this may not be visible in the practice of the lawyers, but it[50] came out again. And of course, when in modern times the Roman law was rejuvenated and reintroduced altogether in the Middle Ages, there you have the clear distinction between the human and the divine or the canonized law. But in Rome that is a great question. In[51] [Latin] also you have a distinction between *ius* and *fas*, where *fas* means more the divine right and *ius* more the human right, but I do not believe that this is relevant here. When we discuss these matters, we have in mind the notion of a fundamentally secular society, strictly secular, which permits[52] and tolerates, and perhaps even more than tolerates also religious convictions but which have as such no legal relevance

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[ii] That is, to Aristotle's *Politics*.
[iii] Ernest Barker, *Introduction to Politics, by Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), XIX.
[iv] Ernest Barker, *Introduction to Politics, by Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), XIX-XX.

whatever. And that was not so in former times, either pagan or Christian—or for Islam, for that matter. Good. Now that's enough.

Student: Could you repeat the point on the possible conflict between [the] *daimonion* and the Delphic oracle, possible—

LS: No. The *daimonion*, as he explicitly says, holds him back from politics and therefore it saves his life because[53], to the extent to which he went into politics twice, his life came into danger under the democracy as well [as] under the oligarchy. The Delphic oracle, however, by commanding him (as he presents it) to examine every Athenian and therewith debunking them, and so Socrates became hated and the net result was that they tried to kill him. So the effect of the Delphic oracle is life-destroying, and the effect of the *daimonion* is life-preserving up to this point. We must see[54] whether Socrates doesn't find an agreement, an ultimate agreement.

Student: But up to this point we haven't found any agreement.

LS: No, no. We have to leave it at that. So now I think we will continue, and we just have read last time the passage when he spoke of the fact that his examining people is not unpleasant.[55] And we begin at the sequel, c4 to 7.

Mr. Reinken: "But, as I believe, I have been—" (33c5-33c6).

LS: Not "as I believe," "as I assert."

Mr. Reinken: "as I assert,[v] I have been commanded to do this by the God through oracles and dreams and in every way in which any man was ever commanded by divine power to do anything whatsoever." (33c5-33c9)

LS: "By divine allotment," ya. You see, that is very interesting. Socrates now minimizes the importance of the Delphic oracle by speaking in the plural—oracles—and putting it on the same level as dreams. So the Delphic oracle is after all not so terribly important. What remains of it? Well, the gods, mysteries; a certain mysterious change in Socrates from his youthful *physiologia* to what he did in later years; and that such a change took place we know clearly from the *Phaedo*, Plato's *Phaedo*, [and] by implication also from Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*—only in the *Phaedo* it is made clear that it was not a mysterious change, but it is a perfectly reasonable change because he saw the inadequacy of this kind of natural philosophy and turned therefore to another kind. Good. Now let us go on now. But this is part of the movement which I mentioned. First,[56] Socrates's life activity is not unpleasant, meaning it is pleasant even to Socrates. And now a further step in the same direction: the Delphic oracle is not so important; any dream which Socrates had would have had the same effect. Yes?

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[v] In original: "I believe"

Mr. Reinken:

> This, Athenians, is true and easily tested. For if I am corrupting some of the young men and have corrupted others, surely some of them who have grown older, if they recognise that I ever gave them any bad advice when they were young, ought now to have come forward to accuse me. Or if they did not wish to do it themselves, some of their relatives—fathers or brothers or other kinsfolk—ought now to tell the facts. And there are many of them present, whom I see— (33c9-33d8)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Now Socrates[57] is concerned with proving that he was not a teacher; that is the context, meaning that he did not corrupt the young. The young themselves, after they have grown up, would testify against Socrates[58] if he corrupted them. Or if the young themselves did not want to do this to their old teacher, well, their relatives would. The latter reminds us of Aristophanes's *Clouds*,[59] when the father, Strepsiades, tries to act against Socrates and wants to have the help of his son, Pheidippides. Pheidippides, while not running to Socrates's defense exactly, refuses to help his father in burning down Socrates's think-tank.[vi] You want to say something?

Student: I read . . . [*Socrates*] by A. E. Taylor, who says, referring to this particular passage, that according to Athenian law at that time, all acts before the establishment of Anytus and Meletus had been pardoned, and so that Socrates is talking to these people, telling them: Well, you can bring your witnesses forth, knowing full well that he's been pardoned from all these previous acts and these witnesses can't speak.[vii]

LS: Ya. Well, you see[60] Burnet also[61] makes use of that law. There are two possibilities. The first, that Plato in writing the *Apology* disregarded certain legal impossibilities;[62] I regard this as possible. And the second is that there was perhaps some legal subtlety about the interpretation of these amnesties[63]; subtleties [of] which we do no longer know. We have to stick to what we have in our hands. Good. Now, read the sequel.

Mr. Reinken:

> many of them present, whom I see; first Crito here, who is of my own age and my own deme and father of Critobulus, who is also present[64]; then there is Lysanias the Sphettian, father of Aeschines, who is here; and also Antiphon of Cephisus, father of Epigenes. Then here are others whose brothers joined in my conversations, Nicostratus, son of Theozotides and brother of Theodotus (now Theodotus is dead, so he could not stop him by entreaties), and Paralus, son of Demodocus; Theages was his brother; and Adeimantus, son of Aristo, whose brother is Plato here; and Aeantodorus, whose brother Apollodorus is present. (33d7-34a2)

LS: Ya, you see one of the few mentions of Plato in the dialogues of Plato. Now where the young one, the corrupted young one is still alive (and this would be the normal case, because

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[vi] Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1475-1509.

[vii] A. E. Taylor, "The Later Life of Socrates," in *Socrates: the Man and His Thought* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), 112-118.

people usually die not in their youth), that young one might have prevailed on his family not to compromise him or his family by testifying against Socrates. Is this not implied? And therefore we do not know [LS chuckles] how many of these corrupted young ones prevailed on their elders. Socrates thus alludes to the questionable character of this kind of reasoning. We will later on have to return to this enumeration of men. Some of them are quite well known to us, especially Crito and Critobulus. Crito is the hero of the *Crito*, which we will read later, a very wealthy gentleman farmer. Critobulus [was] apparently a good-for-nothing, but not through Socrates's fault. And the others: Theages is the one of whom I spoke last time[65], who wanted to become a tyrant, you know, and Socrates refused to accept him as a pupil; and Adeimantus, of course, we all know from the *Republic*. There are altogether seven possible victims of Socrates, if you count. It might—you may check me—and five only alive. But seventeen names of men, [66]which include also the patronyms, of course. We will come back to that later. Good. Two are dead, as you must have seen: Theages is dead and Theodotus is dead. And we come back to this later. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:

> And I can mention to you many others, some one of whom Meletus ought certainly to have produced as a witness in his speech; but if he forgot it then, let him do so now; I yield the floor to him, and let him say, if he has any such testimony. But you will find that the exact opposite is the case, gentlemen, and that they are all ready to aid me, the man who corrupts and injures their relatives, as Meletus and Anytus say. Now those who are themselves corrupted might have some motive in aiding me; but what reason could their relatives have, who are not corrupted and are already older men, unless it be the right and true reason, that they know that Meletus is lying and I am speaking the truth? (34a2-34b6)

LS: Ya, well, we have seen that this argument is not fully conclusive. I mean, the corrupted ones probably would, owing to their corruption, be on Socrates's side. Let us grant that. But as for the relatives there is a question. There is a question whether they should compromise the black sheep in the family in public. That is the difficulty, ya. Good. Someone wanted to say something?

Mr. Fielding: Could not Meletus produce Critias, Callias, and Alcibiades?[67]

LS: They were dead by that time.

Mr. Fielding: Well, I mean, that's why they obviously can't be literally produced but—

LS: Ya, that is true[68] and there the family of course[69] would be unable to rise in defense. But this Callias-Alcibiades issue is not mentioned here at all, only once alluded to without mentioning the names. And well, the defense of Socrates against that you would find in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, [Book 1], second chapter. And there he simply says Socrates knew them; they came to Socrates because they knew that Socrates was a very gifted man and they believed they could be furthered by being together with him, but Socrates has no responsibility whatever for their terrible actions and shows this in detail.

Mr. Fielding: But the Athenians might think so.

LS: Ya, surely. What can you do? I mean, guilt by association or what?

Mr. Fielding: But he doesn't, you know, defend himself against that, I mean—

LS: Well, the simple reason would be, I suppose, that he implies the thought is so fantastic that it is not worthy even to be mentioned. But[70] surely it is one of the many defects which this apology, as an apology, has. But Plato had his reasons for not mentioning it. But he wrote two—well, there are two dialogues [called] *Alcibiades* written by Plato—and the Critias is not the same Critias, but still the name is the same. But in the dialogue *Charmides*, Critias and Charmides, two leaders of the Thirty, when they were still young had a conversation with Socrates on the subject of moderation—these future tyrants. That is one of Plato's jokes, just as he has a discussion on courage between Socrates and two defeated generals. [Laughter] I suppose victorious generals wouldn't have any conversation with Socrates. Yes?

Student: In the *Gorgias*, Socrates says that if a student of a rhetorician turns out bad, that's their teacher. What application would this have to Alcibiades?

LS: Ya, well, you can also put it in another way. Socrates says in the *Gorgias* also, and here too [LS taps on the book] later on, that he is a truly political man. And yet[71] the only man who really takes care of the politics in the proper manner is condemned to death by the men who tried to educate. Or take a more simple example: his objection to Pericles and Themistocles and the others is[72] that they were unable to take care of their own sons, and their sons were either good-for-nothings or very inferior people. Well, what about Socrates's own children? Wholly insignificant men. And so this is a part of a very long argument, and where the irony of Socrates is quite visible. Or to take another particularly funny example, when he is asked at a banquet presented by Xenophon: Why did you marry Xanthippe, the most difficult of all women, past, present, and future? [Laughter] And then he said: Well, I knew that I had to get along with human beings, and therefore just [as] if I had wished to become a horsic man I would of course not take a lame mare but the most fiery horse [laughter], for the same reason I took this most difficult woman, thinking that if I can handle her I can handle anyone.[viii] [Laughter] Now, and the funny thing is of course that he did not even succeed in handling Xanthippe [laughter]. How could he succeed in handling the Athenian demos? So that is a problem which Socrates never solved, and that is the obvious comedy of Socrates's life. Good. Now let us go on.

Mr. Reinken: "Well, gentlemen, this, and perhaps more like this, is about all I have to say in my defence." (34b7-34b8)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. So here we are at the end of Socrates's speech of defense, and hence in particular of its last part, the part beginning [at] 28b3—you remember the part which doesn't seem to have a clear subject. Now let us first review that part and see whether we can see some thread through this argument from 28b3 to here. It begins as follows: it is contemptible to be

[viii] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* II.10.

concerned with one's preservation, especially when one exposes[73] oneself to mortal danger through obeying the command of a god. Fear of death is fear of Hades—a grave equation, fear of death is fear of Hades, and therefore pretending to know what one does not know, namely, the things in Hades. Socrates will obey the god's command, i.e., he will philosophize even if it will be forbidden as a capital crime by an Athenian law. Obeying the god's commands[74] means examining all Athenians in regard to virtue and urging them on toward virtue as distinguished from money. For we obtain all other good things through virtue, and not virtue through the other goods, which implies, although it is there not stated, [that] if we care for our becoming as virtuous as possible, we do not have to care for our self-preservation because all other goods follow from it. By killing Socrates the Athenians will not harm him whom they cannot harm anyway because of his virtue: they will harm only themselves, for he is sent by the god as a gadfly which does not cease stinging everyone the whole day at every part of his body. In other words, philosophizing has now tacitly been replaced by this gadfly activity. This activity, this unceasing concern with the virtue of every Athenian does not indeed make Socrates universally hated as his debunking of the allegedly wise did, but it made him poor. Now poverty is surely not a desirable condition but, according to the ordinary estimate, less bad than being killed. While he was unceasingly concerned with the affairs of every Athenian, he did not dare to become politically active. This was due to his *daimonion*, which held him back from doing the political things. His *daimonion*, in contradistinction to the Delphic oracle, was concerned with Socrates's preservation; hence Socrates was only twice dragged into politics in his whole life, and each time he came into mortal danger. Otherwise,[75] he minded only his own business, i.e., he never was a teacher of anyone. He did have followers; some men followed him because of the pleasure which he procured for them by debunking the allegedly wise. He did not corrupt anyone. Socrates is silent in this part on the impiety charge. He takes care of it implicitly by his constant reference to his divine mission. And one can rightly say if a man has a divine mission, there must be gods. Good. This, as a summary of this section, and I hope that its meaning has now become somewhat clearer. Yes?

Mr. Bruell: Is it correct to say that in the last part, as opposed to the first, the impiety charge is taken up first, and then the corruption?

LS: In this last section[76] the impiety charge is not taken up explicitly at all.

Mr. Bruell: No, not the charge,[77] what I should have said is that the Delphic oracle is taken up in the first part of the last section as a reason for Socrates's[78] disobedience.

LS: Disobedience to the Athenians.

Mr. Bruell: Yes.

LS: Yes, but I think it would be better to say, and could more easily be supported by evidence, that the impiety charge is dropped and only the corruption charge is discussed because the impiety charge[79] has been disposed of by the refutation of Meletus. That it is lingering on, that goes without saying, but the more obvious fact is that the corruption charge is explicitly mentioned in this section and not the impiety charge. In other words,[80] you must always compare

comparable things. You may compare explicit utterances with other explicit utterances, and you may compare implicit utterance or hints with other hints, but you cannot do both things at the same time.[81]

Student: Just a short question. Do you think it's possible that the discussion where he adds, that is: "I believe I have been commanded to do this by the god through oracles and dreams and in every way which any man was ever commanded[ix] by divine power to do anything whatsoever," is not so much a downgrading of the oracle as an attempt to prove how completely his life has been infected by or permeated by divinity and divine command?

LS: Ya, you can say that. But still, if you consider that at the beginning of this whole argument the sole reason given was the Delphic oracle, this answer to Chaerephon's question and when he speaks now of "oracles and dreams" in the plural, that surely takes away from the importance of the Delphic oracle. Now shall we go on where we left off.

Mr. Reinken: "Perhaps some one among you may be offended when he remembers his own conduct, if he, even in a case of less importance than this, begged and besought the judges with many tears, and brought forward his children to arouse compassion, and many other friends and relatives; whereas I will do none of these things, though I am, apparently, in the very greatest danger. Perhaps some one with these thoughts in mind—" (34b9-34c7)

LS: Ya, "apparently—"[82]

Mr. Reinken: "Evidently?"

LS: No, no no no, "as I might seem." In other words, that is not necessarily Socrates's own view.

Mr. Reinken: "Perhaps some one with these thoughts in mind may be harshly disposed toward me and may cast his vote in anger. Now if any one of you is so disposed—I do not believe there is a such a person—but if there should be, I think I should be speaking fairly if I said to him—" (349-34d1)

LS: Let us stop here. Now in the conclusion of his speech, Socrates points to another reason why his judges, or one of them, might have become angry at him, a reason wholly different from the reasons given before. By this he does his best to provoke that anger by pointing out they *could* be angry with him. And[83] he retracts the suggestion, as you see: If one of you is so disposed; I don't believe that there is, but just in case. This retraction makes things worse rather than better, as you can easily see: if you say something unconditionally, something unquestionable to someone [else's] face[84] and retract it by a conditional clause, it's only a more subtle way of making the same insult. Yes? Now what does he say to these men? And Socrates didn't follow the ordinary Athenian practice: bring his kids with him, and they should cry, and show all kinds of things,and arouse the compassion of the judges. That is beautifully presented in Aristophanes's *Wasps*. A judge describes the great felicity they derive from the fact that the defendants try to rouse their

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[ix] In original: "has ever been commanded"

compassion and at the same time tell jokes in order to please them, to exhilarate them.[x] Yes, but Socrates doesn't speak of jokes [LS laughs], he speaks only of [arousing] compassion[85].

Mr. Reinken: "My friend, I too have relatives, for I am, as Homer has it, 'not born of an oak or a rock,' but of human parents, so that I have relatives and, men of Athens, I have three sons, one nearly grown up, and two still children; but nevertheless I shall not bring any of them here and beg you to acquit me." (34d1-34d7)

LS: Ya, now Socrates mentions this fact about his children[86], which implies that one of these children was very young—as we know from the end of the *Phaedo*, when Xanthippe is shown with him there that he was still biologically, if I may say so, young.[xi] That is not unimportant for a judgment of the situation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And why shall I not do so? Not because I am stubborn, dear Athenians,[xii] or lack respect for you. Whether I fear death or not is another matter, but for the sake of my good name and yours and that of the whole city,[xiii] I think it is not right for me to do any of—" (34d7-34e3)

LS: "Not fine, not noble, not fair." *Kalon*, not *agathon*.

Mr. Reinken: "it is not noble[xiv] for me to do any of these things in view of my age and my reputation, whether deserved or not; for at any rate the opinion prevails that Socrates is in some way superior to most men." (34e3-35a1)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Socrates traces his refusal to comply with the common Athenian practice explicitly not to his contempt of death, here, but to his concern with his reputation and also with the reputation of his city. That is important, that here he[87] no longer says that death doesn't mean anything to him. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "If then those of you who are supposed to be superior either in wisdom or in courage or in any other way—in any other virtue whatsoever are to behave—" (35a1-35a3)

LS: You see there is no virtue —*sōphrosynē*, for example, moderation, is not mentioned here . . . . Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> are to behave in such a way, it would be disgraceful. Why, I have often seen men who have some reputation behaving in the strangest manner, when they were on trial, as if they thought they were going to suffer something terrible if they were put to death, just as if they would be immortal if you did not kill them. It seems to

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[x] Aristophanes, *Wasps*, lines 552 following.
[xi] *Phaedo* 60a.
[xii] In original: "Athenians"
[xiii] In original: "whole state"
[xiv] In original: "right"

> me that they are a disgrace to the city[xv] and that any stranger might say that those of the Athenians who excel in virtue, men whom they themselves honour with offices and other marks of esteem, are no better than women. Such acts, men of Athens, we who have any reputation at all ought not to commit, and if we commit them you ought not to allow it, but you should make it clear that you will be much more ready to condemn a man who puts before you such pitiable scenes and makes the city ridiculous than one who keeps quiet. (35a3-35b10)

LS: Ya, "such pitiful dramas" would be more literal and not [a] misleading translation. The reputation of Athens requires that the outstanding Athenians [not] be[88] permitted to appeal to the pity of the judges, because it is a disgrace to them and therefore also to the city of Athens. Because the city will be judged[89] [by] its most outstanding members. Yes, now?

Mr. Reinken:

> But apart from the question of reputation, gentlemen, I think it is not right to implore the judge or to get acquitted by begging; we ought to inform and convince him. For the judge is not here to grant favours in matters of justice, but to give judgment; and his oath binds him not to do favours according to his pleasure, but to judge according to the laws; therefore, we ought not to get you into the habit of breaking your oaths, nor ought you to fall into that habit; for neither of us would be acting piously. Do not, therefore, men of Athens, demand of me that I act before you in a way which I consider neither honorable nor right nor pious, especially when impiety is the very thing for which— (35b10-35d1)

LS: "By Zeus," he says here in this comment.

Mr. Reinken:

> especially, by Zeus,[xvi] when impiety is the very thing for which Meletus[xvii] has brought me to trial. For it is plain that if by persuasion and supplication I forced you to break your oaths I should teach you to disbelieve in the existence of the gods and in making my defence should accuse myself of not believing in them. But that is far from the truth; for I do believe in them, men of Athens, more than any of my accusers, and I entrust my case to you and to the God to decide it as shall be best for me and for you. (35d1-35d10)

LS: Yes. Now such an appeal to the pity or compassion of the judges would also not be just, apart from the fact that it brings a bad reputation to the city, nor would it be pious; and this is a magnificent parting shot with which he ends his speech because the common Athenian practice is presupposed on allowing for perjury, [90]in inducing the judges to become perjured. And therefore Socrates says this is the very proof of his piety: that he does not engage in this practice. Now while a pious man would not commit perjury nor induce others to commit perjury, a man

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[xv] In original: "state"
[xvi] "by Zeus" not in original.
[xvii] In original: "Meletus here"

not believing in the gods of the city might also fail to do these things. Socrates's refusal to play on the pity of the judges does not prove that he believes that the gods of the city are.[xviii] I believe that is clear. After all, there are so many reasons against perjury—against influencing the judges' judgment, more precisely—that this can also be established without reference to the gods of the city.

So this is the end of Socrates's apology proper, the speech of defense. And we can[91] pause again before we turn to the next section.[92] So in other words, to that extent, Mr. Bruell, you are right: at the very end of the speech he comes back to that issue of impiety and gives a new proof of his piety, namely, his refusal to commit perjury or to make other men [do so]. Incidentally, this is also the proof of Socrates's piety given by Xenophon in the first chapter of the *Memorabilia*.[xix] He gives all kinds of proofs—that Socrates was sacrificing, and praying,[93] and some other things—and then he comes to a point, to a fact which all knew while the other things were not universally known, and that is that Socrates refused to commit perjury at the trial of the generals after the Battle of the Arginusae, where Socrates said: I will not perjure myself, and therefore I will obey the law and have each of the defendants judged by himself and not en bloc. Yes, you wanted to—

Mr. Reinken: I was going to refer to that being hinted at in this telling of it because when he spoke of "how I've always stood up for what was just," he also [mentions] what was holy, *hosion*.

LS: Does he mention it there?

Mr. Reinken: Yes.

LS: It's easy to find.

Mr. Reinken: I do remember *hosion* coming as—Socrates saying "holier than thou" to the whole city of Athens.

Student: 35d.

LS: 35. No, that is not the passage which Mr. Reinken means. No, and I think in the passage which you mean, 32a to b, there is nothing of *hosion*.

Student: 32d3.

LS: 32d, but that is not the Battle of the Arginusae, that is the story of Leon of Salamis under the Thirty Tyrants. Yes, that is minor. Yes?

[xviii] That is, that they exist.
[xix] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I. 18-19.

Mr. Fielding: [94]Would you comment on[95] [the] fact that [at] 34b he ends by reemphasizing that Meletus is lying and that he is telling the truth, and the emphasis is on the reputation of his city following. That is to say—

LS: Do you mean the emphasis on Meletus, i.e., the non-emphasis on Anytus? Do you mean that?

Mr. Fielding: More the emphasis between truth-telling and lying—

LS: Ya, well, that was the thing with which he began. And it's very good you bring up this question. You remember at the beginning, he said [that] the accusers haven't said, so to speak, a single true word. And now here he seems to make a distinction. I'm grateful to you, I had not observed that. Now he seems to make a distinction between Meletus, who is a proven liar, and Anytus, one of the other accusers, where it is not proven, at least not in the court of law. That is indeed a point which one should consider. And also later on,[96] Meletus is somehow singled out as the accuser and whereas the two others, Anytus and Lycon, are pushed into the back[ground], and[97] especially Anytus may have been much more important than[98] [Lycon].[99] We do not know in this way what precisely were the points made by Anytus in his speech. That is another handicap which we have and which prevents us from judging with finality on what has happened there. Yes?

Student: And the first part where he says that the accusers' speech: first, Socrates says that the accusers proceeds by slander, and what do you think about splitting up these two sections by saying that first, first part is Socrates's explanation of the slander and second, is hisexplanation of the envy against—

LS: Ya, but how? I mean, how would you draw the line here?

Same student: Well, for instance, where he brings in the *anthrōpos*, the lout, or the Mack,[100] has a central position. For that—

LS: [101]The distinction between slander and envy is very simple.[102] Slander refers to[103] the untrue things said about Socrates. Envy would refer to the motive,[104] and I don't see how this would apply here. You could find an application of it—no, no, I don't think you can do [that]. This distinction is perfectly intelligible itself but it doesn't find an expression in the organization, in the plan of that book.

Same student: Well, what I was thinking of was that in the first part, Socrates asks Meletus if he thinks that he, Socrates is worse than all the rest of the Athenians[105]. Meletus says that Socrates is worse than all the rest of the Athenians because he is the only one who corrupts them.

LS: Yes.

Same student: So what I was thinking of is that generally in the first part, Socrates[106] says [that] these accusers present him as being worse than all of the Athenians, as a matter of fact, worse than all men.

LS: [107]Yes, that is a slander.

Same student: And that's the slander.

LS: Ya.

Same student: And then when the *anthrōpos* comes on the scene, Socrates proves that he is at least as good as the other Athenians[108] because he stands in the field of battle, which means—

LS: Ya, but on the other hand, he showed throughout his criticism of the accusers that he is in fact better than that; for example, that he is wiser because he knows that he knows nothing, whereas the others claim to know while knowing nothing.

Same student: But he is wiser, but then after the the *anthrōpos*, after that scene, then Socrates goes on to say why he is better than everybody else. People actually—

LS: Ya, but still—

Same student: He has the reputation of being better than everybody else. He's the single, I mean—

LS: Wiser. Wiser, they say. But[109] to come back to the main point, I don't believe that this perfectly intelligible distinction between slander and envy, between the bad act and the motive of that bad act,[110] finds no expression in the plan of the *Apology* or any part of it. That's all I can say.[111] To some extent it occurs when Socrates[112] [asks] the question: Why am I accused of these things of which I am not guilty? And then he says: Well, (a) the story of the Delphic oracle and what followed from that, and the debunking, and this is then the hatred following from the debunking; that is the motive leading to the slander that he corrupts the young; (b) that he is impious.[113] But this we don't need to explain; that is true, to that extent it is an important part, but it does not affect the plan of the whole.[114] I can only repeat that.

Mr. Bruell: Does the fact that the corrupted young people want to avoid being stigmatized by being pointed out, that doesn't—

LS: Some of them. One cannot know. There may also have been others who were so angry at Socrates that they would like to take revenge.

Mr. Bruell: But that doesn't explain why many would be ready to help him.

LS: Because they were corrupted.

Mr. Bruell: But then if that's the case, then that refutes his earlier point in[115] his disproof of the corruption charge to Meletus.

LS: No, I'm speaking now from the point of view of the Athenians, not from the point of view of Socrates.[116] I mean, Socrates is a corrupter, they say. Now Socrates might have been so successful in his corruption in some cases that the corrupted ones are happy through their corruption and therefore would have sympathy with their corrupter. That could be. There is no contradiction, it could be.

Mr. Bruell: There's no contradiction here, but[117] earlier he had said: I wouldn't be so foolish as to corrupt those people who are around me because—

LS: I see,[118] you mean, just as a man doesn't educate his dogs to become vicious to everyone including himself, whereas as we all know the dog-trainer will make the dog vicious to postmen and other strangers [laughter] but not to himself, which would be a good example. And since this is also a famous Socratic example ([the] *Republic*) one could say this is a refutation of this whole argument, that it's not so simple. So that, in other words, merely utilitarian considerations[119] on the lowest level are perfectly compatible with corrupting the young. That's what you are driving at. Yes?

Student: I'm a little confused on one point. The view of the lout seems to find expression in common Athenian practice.

LS: Yes. In other words, the Athenians—

Student: The Athenians on the one hand believe that disgrace is worse than death, and on the other hand they do not believe that disgrace—

LS: Yes, that is true. But you are quite right.[120] Of course, in fairness to the Athenians we must say we all are guilty of such contradictions. But they would not regard it as an act of courage to say: I have committed this punishable offense and I take my punishment. I believe that this hasn't changed too much since; I mean, you find more people who are brave on the battlefield than brave in this sense in the law courts. Don't you think so? Yes?

Student: Socrates has accused his judges of being a number of things. Is he now, in this last example, accusing them of being impious? Would they take this as another charge?

LS: I beg your pardon?

Same student: [121]Is Socrates now, in this last example, accusing his judges of being impious, at least in their past actions, because they're willing to—

LS: Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Same student: So they would take this as—

LS: Yes, you know, he turns it around, ya, and he says, in other words, where it counts, in actions, he is more pious than they, because he would not perjure himself and they would abet perjury by their practice. Yes?

Mr. Fielding: It seems that if one compares the beginning and end of Socrates's first speech that there is a very subtle but significant change in emphasis. At the beginning he focuses on telling the truth and justice, but at the end he focuses on reputation, that is, opinion and justice.

LS: Not only on reputation: he speaks very much so of reputation[122] and he devotes more space to the reputation than to justice here. That is true.

Mr. Fielding: But I was wondering, at the beginning we have truth and justice and at the end we seem to have not so much that but opinion and justice, whether things might not have changed.

LS: I see. That makes some sense, what you say; but I would have to think it over. But it is a suggestion which at least on the face of it is interesting. Yes?

Student: I would also be interested in understanding why reputation takes such a large place here and in relation particularly to the city, because earlier Socrates seeks out those who have a reputation for wisdom in order to show them that they do not have wisdom, and this would have the effect, the negative effect on the reputation of Athens.

LS: You mean this shows a concern for reputation, whereas formerly he despises that reputation. That's fundamentally what your predecessor said, yes, and that is a point which has to be considered: whether this doesn't have something to do with that movement of Socrates's thought from the beginning to the end. That is surely worthy of consideration.[123]

Student: I just wondered why you think he does bring up a thought that the judges may not have. In other words, on the—

LS: I know what you mean, namely, the thought[124] that he reminds them of the fact that he has brought his kids to beg for mercy.

Same student: Well, and then when he finally does, you see[125] at the bottom of page 123: now if any of you are so disposed, I do not think there is such a person; and then there's a few sentences about his children, and then he gets back to it and says: But the opinion does prevail, I think, that some of you think I'm superior.

LS: Ya, but this in a somewhat different context. When he speaks of the reputation question, he says: [126]We all as good citizens are concerned with the reputation of the city. And most important in this respect is the conduct of those citizens who have a high reputation, whether deserved or not; they still owe something to that city. [LS taps the table for emphasis] That's in a different context. Now, as to the first point to which you referred, that Socrates brings up something which aggravates his situation, namely, that he underlines it: that I did not[127] act as

Pericles himself surely would have acted and anybody else, bring[ing] the kids to beg for mercy.[128] One can give a simple answer to that, and that is that Socrates has promised more than once he will say the whole truth, and therefore he gives them all the evidence against him so that they can judge fairly. Well, but whether that is a sufficient answer, that is a question.[129]

Student: I was going to ask if perhaps the turn to reputation here is a contrast to the original turn to reputation, and that here reputation is associated with acting virtuously, i.e., reputation[130] is conceived of as a thing that should be founded on a virtuous and proper way of action, and he's underlining the difference between himself and others in that for him, reputation is not founded on opinion but on—

LS: No, no; *doxa* means *doxa*. I mean surely that reputation is something not utterly negligible is of course[131] [something] which every man of common sense says, and [which] Socrates would admit. But it is also not[132] the most important thing and is not something very reliable[133] because we have always to judge: Is the reputation deserved? I mean, we have many occasions in our own life and wherever we look to make this distinction between deserved and undeserved reputation.

Student: Isn't that what he's trying to point to? It seems to me that's in a sense what Socrates is trying to point to.

LS: Yes, surely not all people make the distinction to that extent; one can say that, but otherwise I don't believe that there is such an emphasis on that. Good. Now we come now to the second part of Plato's *Apology*, and that is the so-called *antitimēsis*. Very briefly,[134] the jury decides guilty or not guilty. It has decided in the case of Socrates: guilty. And they have proposed a certain punishment, death. And then, according to the then Athenian law, the defendant was entitled to make a counterproposal on the basis of the fact that he is guilty, a counterproposal regarding the punishment. And this is the *antitimēsis*, which starts here at the end of 35 and goes up to 38b inclusively and which is the center part of the whole work, and to that extent of special interest to those who believe in the special importance of what is in the center. Good. And which may be a superstition, but which nevertheless is something, my experience has convinced me that this is so. Good. Now let us—we can still read something. Let us begin.

Mr. Reinken:

> I am not grieved, men of Athens, at this vote of condemnation you have cast against me, and that for many reasons, among them the fact that your decision was not a surprise to me. I am much more surprised by the number of votes for and against it; for I did not expect so small a majority, but a large one. Now, it seems, if only thirty votes had been cast the other way, I should have been acquitted. And so, I think, so far as Meletus is concerned, I have even now been acquitted, and not merely acquitted, but anyone can see that, if Anytus and Lycon had not come forward to accuse me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth part of the votes. (35e1-36b2)

LS: Ya, well, that is an obvious joke. I mean, it makes sense only when we assume there were 500 judges; and then there would be 280 for Socrates's condemnation and 220 against it. And[135] he assumes that each of the three accusers is equally important: he divides 280 by 3, which is 93 or thereabouts. Now that would be less than a fifth of the minimum number which you would have to get, otherwise he would be fined as a frivolous accuser. So you see, here Socrates continues to poke fun at Meletus, to treat him comically. And that is in—earlier, in 3d, we have said that Meletus treats Socrates comically by bringing in the *daimonion* and making the *daimonia* of the indictment out of it. In fact, the man who treats comically here anybody is not Meletus, to say nothing of the other accusers, but Socrates, as will not be surprising to you. Yes. And you see what—here this passage makes it clearer than any earlier passage except the very beginning that there were also accusations, speeches by Anytus and Lycon, and Socrates does not reply to them, and they may have had some interesting things to say for all we know about Alcibiades and Critias and so. And we have no Platonic-Socratic answer to that; we have only Xenophon's answer. Ya, now go on.

Mr. Reinken:

> And so the man proposes the penalty of death. Well, then, what shall I propose as an alternative? Clearly that which I deserve, shall I not? And what do I deserve to suffer or to pay, because in my life I did not keep quiet, but neglecting what most men care for—money-making and property, and military offices, and public speaking, and the various offices and plots and parties that come up in the city[xx]—and thinking that I was really too honourable to engage in those activities and live— (36b2-36c1)

LS: Now let us stop here. Now, how did he say that second point after moneymaking?

Mr. Reinken: "Property—military offices." (36b8)

LS: No, no, before the military. Moneymaking—

Mr. Reinken: "money-making and property." (36b7)

LS: "Management of the household." That is of some importance. Now Socrates replaces tacitly the question "what punishment do I deserve?" by the question "what do I deserve?" Because[136] wishing to say the whole truth, he cannot say that he deserves punishment. He disregards the fact that he was found guilty of impiety, naturally. In order to establish what he deserves, he gives a summary of what he did throughout his life. Throughout his life he neglected his *oikos*, his home, his family, and the polis out of contempt. He was too good for these things. He[xxi] translates this as "honorable," which is, as a translation, all right, but in more idiomatic English one would say he was too good for these things—more precisely, out of contempt for the generally held view that one must take care of one's household and engage in politics in order to be saved. Now when he spoke of his *daimonion*, he had said that engaging in political life is a sure way to ruin (you will remember that) and now political life is presented as a way towards

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[xx] In original: "state"
[xxi] Presumably H. N. Fowler.

saving one's life. But there he had added that engaging in political life is a sure way to ruin if one wishes to act justly. This qualification is here of course omitted. Or one can perhaps also say people engage in political life in order to save their lives and have good connections in the case of the next rising or a change of regimes, that in order to save their lives and fortunes, but they do not succeed. It is, in other words, the bad calculation. Socrates does not retract, then, what he said when speaking of his *daimonion*, but he makes two changes in this restatement. First, he expresses contempt for political life, which is much more than he said in the *daimonion* section, where he simply said the daimonion keeps him back out of concern with Socrates. And secondly, he enlarges the theme by extending it to the management of his household, and that includes of course not only moneymaking, which is here expressly distinguished, but taking care of his wife and his kids. So he regarded himself as too good for that.

In the eighteenth century, someone who knew this source apparently quite well wrote a dissertation in Latin with the title, *Socrates nec Officiosus Maritus nec Laudandus Paterfamilias*.[xxii] Socrates was neither a dutiful husband nor a praiseworthy father of a family, and he gives lots of proof for that. That is of course a great question,[137] that is, Socrates's posture towards the city and towards his own family have many parallels. I gave you the example of Xanthippe before. Now this raises of course that Socrates is not concerned, is too good, which is of course also one of his many provocative remarks here in this speech. Still, this remark that he is too good for the life of moneymaking or for taking care of such property as he had forces us to raise the question: What is[138] the economic basis of his public-spirited activity? One doesn't have to be a Marxist to raise this question [laughter], one only has to have a bit of common sense. He presents himself as a pauper without any visible means of support; he lives in ten-thousand-fold poverty. Now how could he go on living[139] if there was not something else? Now this question—which is of course not raised either in the Marxist or in the anti-Marxist literature [laughter] because in this respect there is no difference between these two schools—is in fact answered, if one reads it carefully enough, in a work by Xenophon called *Oeconomicus*, where Socrates is presented as a teacher of the art of managing one's household [laughter]—he, who never managed his household. And of course one is compelled to raise the question, since it explained why Socrates explains the very powerful reason, why one must take care of one's household. And he does this, by the way, to that good for nothing Critobulus, the son of Crito, who is wasting his time by going to comedies and doing other things which don't bring him any money. But of course[140] Critobulus's father was a very wealthy man and therefore it did not do him immediate harm. But then the question arises: What did Socrates live on? And I think if one reads the dialogue carefully one will find an answer to that, the economic basis of Socrates's way of life.[141] But I think you should find out for yourself and therefore I won't give you the answer. [Laughter] Yes?

Student: In this passage we have an example of Socrates talking big again, and you said earlier that Socratic irony was essentially dissimulation of one's wisdom or concealing of one's wisdom.

[xxii] Friedrich Mentz and Friedrich Wilhelm Sommer, *Socrates nec Officiosus Maritus nec Laudandus Paterfamilias* (Leipzig: Tietze, 1716).

LS: Ya, but not only. Dissimulation of one's worth.

Student: Of one's worth. I mean, well, in Aristotle, it's primarily concealing one's virtue.

LS: That's the same as worth.

Student: And here we have [an] example of Socrates bluntly, almost brutally, doing just the opposite.

LS: Say boasting.

Same student: Boasting.

LS: Ya, sure[142], this speech is one where[143] he talks big. That's the word used by Xenophon. And I think that if one reads Plato's *Apology*, one will find he does talk big and boastfully. But since Socrates was not a boaster and didn't—a boaster is always a low-class man, and Socrates gives us so many signs that he was not a low-class man so that when he boasts, it will not be mere boasting; I would say it is a provocation. And he wanted apparently to bring this issue to a decision, and not depending on any compassion, sentimentality, or what have you and therefore he provoked the issue. Whether this is not in a way, in a subtle way, suicide, you know, because the stakes were so—that is a very long question. But I think that he provoked his judges is fair to say, but on another level one could say[144] that what we call provocations, and I think rightly, is also saying the whole truth. Socrates did not regard himself—he regarded himself as worthy of the highest honor. Now this has nothing to do with boasting, I mean, if he deserves the honor. The Aristotelian definition of the high-minded man: a man claiming for himself high honors while deserving them.

Same student: One further point: while he tacitly does not refute the charge that he does not believe in the gods of the city,[145] he never goes so far as to say in words, that he does not believe in the gods—

LS: Ya. Well, sure, but the question is: Why did he not do that?[146] Again, is this an ignoble act of cowardice or is it something else? If two men do the same thing, it *is* not not necessarily the same thing, and therefore one has to dig somewhat deeper. But surely the problem of Socrates is not so simple that a well-bred child of six will be able to fathom it, that is true. But I would say all moral questions of any importance go beyond the horizon of that well-bred child of six. Would you not admit that? And therefore we, I think, are only doing our duty to delve a little bit deeper.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "beings—."

[2] Deleted "from the one"

[3] Deleted "Yeah—no—I'm sorry—this."

[4] Deleted "in the context—."

[5] Deleted “whatever—.”

[6] Deleted “therefore.”

[7] Deleted “It has—.”

[8] Deleted “on that—.”

[9] Deleted “this activity”

[10] Deleted “Plato does not leave it as this common—.”

[11] Deleted “they….”

[12] Deleted “is—had—.”

[13] Deleted “again”

[14] Deleted “You can—.”

[15] Deleted “virtue is—.”

[16] Deleted “perhaps—immoderate.”

[17] Deleted “it is not perhaps—one—.”

[18] Deleted “And one is—well, no, I must begin at the beginning.”

[19] Deleted “there sōphrosynē.”

[20] Deleted “But this is the—.”

[21] Deleted “Phaedrus.”

[22] Deleted “and to that extent—and.”

[23] Deleted “LS: Would you—.”

[24] Deleted “[inaudible]. That—yeah—that—.”

[25] Deleted “that we can.”

[26] Deleted “this was not—.”

[27] Deleted “But could it not—.”

[28] Deleted “I mean.”

[29] Deleted “if they—and—and there would—.”

[30] Deleted “are—.”

[31] Deleted “but—.”

[32] Deleted “Even if—.”

[33] Deleted “the—whether the—the judges—.”

[34] Deleted “in the—in the—.”

[35] Deleted “this—

LS: 27c.

Schaefer: He had used.”

[36] Deleted “does that—does that.”

[37] Deleted “No, well—yeah, well, then that would I have to—.”

[38] Deleted “can leave it—we.”

[39] Deleted “was—.”

[40] Deleted “One now—no, this—yeah—and you will be the last.”

[41] Deleted “he.”

[42] Deleted “Greece.”

[43] Deleted “I do not—.”

[44] Deleted “didn’t—didn’t distinguish between—.”

[45] Deleted “did the—did the Romans—.”

[46] Deleted “and.”

[47] Deleted “to a, you know, to—the god was—the king—.”

[48] Deleted “When we—when we—.”

[49] Deleted “Yeah, well the question—.”

[50] Deleted “came down—.”

[51] Deleted “Greek.”

[52] Deleted “and even—.”

[53] Deleted “if he—.”

[54] Deleted “whether there is not a—a kind of—.”

[55] Deleted “R: Bottom of 119.”

[56] Deleted “this activity, or.”

[57] Deleted “proves now—.”

[58] Deleted “if they—.”

[59] Deleted “where—.”

[60] Deleted “the point I—I have read—the—the—.”

[61] Deleted “uses of—.”

[62] Deleted “that is—.”

[63] Deleted “of—.”

[64] Deleted “(33d 7-33e 1)

LS: Yeah, yeah, alright, alright, yeah.”

[65] Deleted “in this dialogue about.”

[66] Deleted “I mean”

[67] Deleted “LS: Pardon?

Fielding: Could not Meletus produce Critias?”

[68] Deleted “But—and—.”

[69] Deleted “would also—.”

[70] Deleted “it is one of the many—.”

[71] Deleted “this same truly political—.”

[72] Deleted “they—.”

[73] Deleted “one’s life.”

[74] Deleted “is—.”

[75] Deleted “he did—.”

[76] Deleted “the impiety—that.”

[77] Deleted “but the—what I—I meant.”

[78] Deleted “LS: Oh, insistence—.”

[79] Deleted “is—.”

[80] Deleted “even—you—I mean.”

[81] Deleted “Q: You mean this—

LS: Can you open the window because it’s very hot here. Let us go on here. You want to say something?”

[82] Deleted “yeah, alright.”

[83] Deleted “and his—.”

[84] Changed from “someone else in his face.”

[85] Moved “arousing;” deleted “yes?”

[86] Deleted “and—.”

[87] Deleted “does.”

[88] Moved “not.”

[89] Deleted “after.”

[90] Deleted “for”

[91] Deleted “make here a.”

[92] Deleted “If there is anything you would like—so it—.”

[93] Deleted “and all the other thing, and then he comes—.”

[94] Deleted “Is it—.”

[95] Deleted “that.”

[96] Deleted “there will be some—.”

[97] Deleted “they may have been more—.”

[98] Deleted “Anytus.”

[99] Deleted “And.”

[100] Deleted “LS: Yeah, alright.

A: that’s—that’s—that’s.”

[101] Deleted “Yeah, but what does it have to do the—between the—I mean.”

[102] Deleted “That.”

[103] Deleted “the things said about Socrates.”

[104] Deleted “So—.”

[105] Deleted “LS: Pardon? He is worse—

A: He is worse than—it comes—comes out—or.”

[106] Deleted “accusers—he.”

[107] Deleted “Yeah, but this comes—.”

[108] Deleted “LS: Yeah, but on the other hand—.”

[109] Deleted “I don’t believe, that you—.”

[110] Deleted “has no—.”

[111] Deleted “It—it—.”

[112] Deleted “says.”

[113] Deleted “But this is not—I think we don’t need it to explain—.”

[114] Deleted “That is—.”

[115] Deleted “that he—.”

[116] Deleted “There might be—.”

[117] Deleted “doesn’t it.”

[118] Deleted “oh this you mean. Yes. This is indeed a complicated—.”

[119] Deleted “do—in the—.”

[120] Deleted “But it is.”

[121] Deleted “Would—would Socrates—.”

[122] Deleted “but then—and—.”

[123] Deleted: Mr. Reinken: [inaudible] LS: I’m sorry, I beg your pardon.”

[124] Deleted “that they—.”

[125] Deleted “you see, on the—.”

[126] Deleted “‘people who.’”

[127] Deleted “‘do—.’”

[128] Deleted “That—one—.”

[129] Deleted “Now, there was someone else. You—were you not—.”

[130] Deleted “is not conceived of as a thing necessarily derive—.”

[131] Deleted “someone.”

[132] Deleted “most—.”

[133] Deleted “So—.”

[134] Deleted “the—Socrates—the—.”

[135] Deleted “if—and.”

[136] Deleted “he is—he can’t—.”

[137] Deleted “which we must—that is—.”

[138] Deleted “the basis of his—.”

[139] Deleted “if he didn’t have—.”

[140] Deleted “Crito’s father was a very wealthy—.”

[141] Deleted “And—.”

[142] Deleted “Yeah, that is—this—.”

[143] Deleted “he is a—here.”

[144] Deleted “what is—.”

[145] Deleted “LS: Yeah.”

[146] Deleted “Is this—.”

Session 9: November 15, 1966

Leo Strauss: I would like to come back for a moment to the question of the *daimonion*, which doesn't mean that we may not come back to it again. Now the most important parallel to what Plato says about Socrates's *daimonion* is what Goethe says about the demonic—in German, *das Dämonische*—especially in[1] his autobiography, which in German is called *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which may mean both[2] *Poetry and Truth* and *Fiction and Truth*, and so it is ambiguous. Now this autobiography may be said to culminate in a statement on this subject toward the end of the last book. There are important agreements between Goethe and Plato, but no less important disagreements. The disagreements must be understood in the light of the radical difference between Goethe and Plato. Goethe's friend Schiller said in a letter to Goethe, "quote, the poet is the only true human being, and the best philosopher is only a caricature compared with him unquote."[i] Now Goethe himself would never have said that, but it was Goethe whose being induced Schiller to make this remark. Plato said the opposite—that [the] poet would be a kind of caricature of the philosopher—especially in the Tenth Book[3] of the *Republic*. But is poet a sufficient description of Goethe? That would be a question. He was very much concerned with minerals, plants, animals, colors, and so on. One[4] might be inclined to say Goethe was a thinker who was not a philosopher, whatever that may mean. As such he prepared [the way for] Nietzsche, and that is a subject we will take up . . . in the next quarter. The fundamental importance of this phenomenon is this: we are concerned with political philosophy. One cannot clarify what political philosophy is without clarity, some clarity about what philosophy is. In order to achieve clarity about philosophy one must know the alternatives to philosophy. Now from Plato's point of view, the alternative to philosophy is poetry. He speaks of the feud between philosophy and poetry, in which he takes the side of philosophy, naturally[5]. And especially today I think it is quite obvious that for many of our contemporaries, the human concerns which were formerly taken care of or thought to be taken care of by philosophy are in fact taken care of by poetry, so that poetry has taken the place of philosophy. And this has, incidentally, very much to do with Goethe himself. Now this in passing.

We have begun to consider the *antitimēsis*, Socrates's[6] counterproposal as to the punishment. There was one passage which attracted our attention, especially[7] 36a7 to b1. This reminded us of the fact that was mentioned in the very beginning of the *Apology* that Meletus was not the only one who had made an accusation speech at Socrates's trial: Anytus and Lycon, the two other accusers, also did. But Socrates refutes only Meletus; by taking issue with him he does not take issue with Anytus and Lycon. What were the points made by Anytus and Lycon? We must be very curious. We don't know. Perhaps Alcibiades and Critias, as the proofs of Socrates's corrupting the young. There is another possibility, which is mentioned by Xenophon in the second chapter of the *Memorabilia*, paragraphs 9, following: "but, by Zeus, the accuser said." Now here in passing, today it is regarded as known by divine revelation that this was of course not the accuser at the trial but some fellow called Polycrates, who wrote[8] a pamphlet called

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[i] Letter to Goethe, January 7, 1795, in *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, hrsg. Emil Staiger (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1966), 81. For an English translation, see *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe*, trans. Dora L. Schmitz, 2 vols. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1887), vol. 1, 371.

"Accusation of Socrates" about a couple of years after Socrates's death. But that is a guess. As Xenophon presents it as the statement of the accuser, i.e., of the accuser at the trial.

> But, by Zeus, the accuser said[ii], he taught his companions to look down on[iii] the established laws by insisting on the folly of appointing public officials by lot, when none would choose a pilot or builder or flautist by lot, nor any other craftsman for work in which mistakes are far less disastrous than mistakes in statecraft. Such sayings, the accuser said[iv], led the young to despise the established political order[v] and made them inclined to violence, to revolution[vi]. But I hold that they who cultivate wisdom and think they will be able to guide the people in prudent policy never lapse into violence: they know that enmities and dangers are inseparable from violence, but persuasion produces the same results safely and amicably. For violence, by making its victims sensible of loss, rouses their hatred: but persuasion, by seeming to confer a favour, wins goodwill. It is not, then, cultivation of wisdom that leads to violent methods, but the possession of power without prudence. Besides, many supporters are necessary to him who ventures to use force: but he who can persuade needs no confederate, having confidence in his own unaided power of persuasion. And such a man has no occasion to shed blood; for who would rather take a man's life than have him[vii] a live and willing follower?[viii]

That's all that Xenophon says on this subject. Xenophon refutes in this way the contention that Socrates induced his companions to engage in violent action. Perhaps the argument is quite good, I will not go into that now. But he does not say a word about another part of the accusation, namely?

Student: Impiety.

LS: That Socrates made his companions look down with contempt on the established polity. And therefore this would be a very good reason for disliking Socrates on the part of the establishment; and therefore also, on the proper occasion, for getting rid of him. Now this issue is not even alluded to, or perhaps it is once alluded to in the *Apology*. Do you know where it is alluded to? A single passage.

Student: Where he suggests another law.

LS: What does he say there?

[ii] In original: "said his accuser"
[iii] In original: "despise"
[iv] In original: "he argued"
[v] In original: "constitution"
[vi] In original: "and made them violent"
[vii] "have him" not in original
[viii] Xenophon, *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology*, trans. E. C. Marchant and O. J. Todd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), I. 2.9-11.

Same student: He says that if the Athenians had a law as they do elsewhere, where—

LS: Ya, this is a criticism of one particular law, that is quite true. But the more important[9] passage? Well,[10] Socrates is the only one who corrupts the young. Who improves the young? And then Meletus says: The laws. And then Socrates says: But who is it who first knows the laws? A somewhat strange formulation. What he means is of course: Who makes the laws? And if the laws are made by inept people, they may be more corrupting than Socrates or anybody else could be.[11]But otherwise the *Apology* is silent about it, and whether the *Crito* is silent about it we will see when we come to it.

Now Socrates has been found guilty. He is now supposed to say what punishment he thinks he deserves. Instead, he answers first the question as to *what* he deserves. He begins by saying that he always regarded himself as too good for the economic and political life, meaning also for taking care of his household, i.e., his family. And he expresses his contempt for what almost all Athenians are concerned with. This was the point which we reached last time, and now let us continue. [12]We turn now [to] where we left, 36c2.

Mr. Reinken: "and thinking that I was really too honourable to engage in those actives and live, refrained from those things by which I should have been of no use to you or to myself, and devoted myself to conferring upon each citizen individually what I regard as the greatest benefit? For I tried to persuade each of you to care for himself and his own perfection in goodness and wisdom—" (36b10-36c7)

LS: Now let us stop here for a moment. Now Socrates's political and economic activity would not have been of any use to the Athenians or to himself. He as it were retracts now his expression of contempt: not that he despises these things but he wouldn't have been good at them. And then his way of life consists in persuading each of them to be concerned with becoming good and sensible before taking care of his household, for example, and also of the city—which is in practice a persuasion to poverty, if it is taken literally. If they devote themselves to their improvement, how will they find the time for doing these morally neutral things like earning money. Now let us go on here.

Mr. Reinken: "for[ix] his own perfection in goodness and wisdom rather than for any of his belongings, and for the city[x] itself rather than for its interests, and to follow—" (36c6-36c9)

LS: Ya, that is also difficult. What does it mean to take care of the city itself,[13] in contradistinction of the things of the city? That's also not quite clear. But go on.

Mr. Reinken:

> and to follow the same method in his care for other things. What, then, does such a man as I deserve? Some good thing, men of Athens, if I must propose

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[ix] In original: "and"
[x] In original: "state"

> something truly in accordance with my deserts; and the good thing should be such as is fitting for me. Now what is fitting for a poor man who is your benefactor, and who needs leisure to exhort you? There is nothing, men of Athens, so fitting as that such a man be given his meals in the prytaneum. That is much more appropriate for me than for any of you who has won a race at the Olympic games with a pair of horses or a four-in-hand. For he makes you seem to be happy, whereas I make you happy in reality; and he is not at all in need of sustenance, but I am needy. So if I must propose a penalty in accordance with my deserts, I propose maintenance in the prytaneum. (36c9-37a1)

LS: Yes. Now this is then Socrates's answer to the question: that is what he deserved. His proposal is based on the fact that he makes the Athenians in fact happy, blessed, which means of course that he makes them in fact virtuous. And then the difficulty arises: How can the Athenians be so ungrateful, i.e., so vicious as to condemn that man to death? I use now against Socrates the argument which Socrates used against Pericles and others: if Pericles was a good statesman, then he made the Athenians better, and then they could never have caused any troubles to him, accused him and so on.[14] So in other words, he claims by implication that his activity was entirely successful. He doesn't say that he tried to make them happy—this would be easy—but that he makes them happy. Just as the victors in the Olympian games were successful, obviously, those who were running and not winning did not get any special honors. Yet he was not successful, as we know. He deserves that honor as little as the participants in the Olympian games who did not win. So that is a very interesting implication of what he says here.

Now there is a point which was made by Burnet here on 36c7. Let me see. Burnet says here [that they should take care of] "the affairs of the city"[15]—you remember they should take care of the affairs of the city first, and then of the things of the city, these "will be such things as national wealth and national glory." I don't take issue with Burnet for speaking of "national wealth" and so on when he speaks of the city, which is somewhat improper. "Here we have in a nutshell the political theory of Socrates, which regards the concern with the city as in principle the same as the concern for oneself. The state which makes honor or wealth its subject[xi] is not the true state. That is just the doctrine of the *Republic*, which only makes explicit the pregnant hints of this sentence." (Burnet 1964, 234) Ya, well this is not what we find here in the text. The distinction between the things of the city and the city itself is not identical with the distinction between external goods—wealth and glory—and the city itself. So that is somewhat obscure. Good.

Now there is another point of Burnet in d7[16], though this passage [is] about the prytaneum. "It should not be necessary to explain that the whole point is just that Socrates is making what the court would consider a monstrous claim"—that is quite true—"and not applying for an old-age pension." (Burnet 1964, 236) That is quite true. But it is as monstrous as quite a few other things, or to use a somewhat less harsh term, it is a great provocation. Socrates provokes the people all the time. He has to because, as he said, he will tell the whole truth. Now surely if he tells the whole truth then he is bound to hurt their feelings. Now let us go on here. We should first try to finish this section.

[xi] In original: "object"

Mr. Reinken: "Perhaps some of you think that in saying this, as in what I said about lamenting and imploring, I am—" (37a2-37a3)

LS: Namely, that he[17] is too good for . . . . Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "—I am speaking in a spirit of bravado; but that is not the case. The truth is rather that I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one; but I cannot convince you of this, for we have conversed with each other only a little while." (37a3-37a8)

LS: [18]"Converse," that's the word for dialogue. For the whole *Apology* is a dialogue: a dialogue between Socrates and the city of Athens, the only dialogue of Socrates with this whole city. We must never forget that—that there was a dialogue narrowly considered between Socrates and Meletus, as you will remember, that is only a part of the dialogue. The whole speech is a dialogue. Now what can this mean? Well, in a dialogue[19], in the Platonic sense of the word at least, one necessarily adapts oneself within the limits of the possible to the man spoken to, to his moods, his capacity, etc. In that sense, the *Apology* surely is a dialogue. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "I believe if you had a law, as some other people have, that capital cases should not be decided in one day, but only after several days, you would be convinced—" (37a8-37b2)

LS: Ya, now let us stop here one moment. We have here also a comment by Burnet[20] [on] this passage. This is [that] the Spartans had such a law; he gives some evidence for that. And "as" another commentator "says, the allusion to Spartan practice is 'hardly politic.'" (Burnet 1964, 237) That is possible. But it is more important to know, as you observe, that this is a criticism of an Athenian law, and that we must keep in mind, when we come to the *Crito*, where Socrates bases his principle that he must obey all Athenian laws on the fact that he has expressed his agreement to them. This is not so simply true, as we see here. Now?

Mr. Reinken:

> but now it is not easy to rid you of great[21] slanders[xii] in a short time. Since, then, I am convinced that I never wronged any one, I am certainly not going to wrong myself, and to say of myself that I have done anything[xiii] bad, and to propose any penalty of that sort for myself. Why should I? Through fear of the penalty that Meletus proposes, about which I say that I do not know whether it is a good thing or an evil? Shall I choose instead of that something which I know to be an evil? What penalty shall I propose? Imprisonment? And why should I live in prison a slave to those who may be in authority? Or shall I propose a fine, with imprisonment until it is paid? But that is the same as what I said just now, for I have no money to pay with. Shall I then propose exile as my penalty? Perhaps you would accept that. I must indeed be possessed by a great love of life if I am so irrational as not to know that if you, who are my fellow citizens, could not endure

[xii] In original: "prejudice"
[xiii] In original: "that I deserve anything"

> my conversation and my words, but found them too irksome and disagreeable, so that you are now seeking to be rid of them, others will not be willing to endure them. No, men of Athens, they certainly will not. A fine life I should lead if I went away at my time of life, wandering from city to city and always being driven out! For well I know that wherever I go, the young men will listen to my talk, as they do here; and if I drive them away, they will themselves persuade their elders to drive to me out, and if I do not drive them away, their fathers and relatives will drive me out for their sakes. (37b2-37e2)

LS: Ya, now you see[22] the alternatives to the reward which Socrates proposed, because it is obviously highly improper after he was found guilty that he should be given a reward for his guilt. The alternatives are, first, death—which is however not mentioned explicitly, you know; he says what Meletus has proposed: prison, fine, exile. These are the three alternatives. As for the fine, he reduces it for the time being to prison, because he couldn't pay it and therefore he would remain in prison all the time. We will see[23] very shortly afterward that Socrates makes a proposal of a fine eventually. But in connection with this strangely provocative character of this whole speech, he brings it only at the end. He could have avoided making the proposal that he should be fed in the prytaneum, and he also could have avoided this passage and he could simply have said: I propose as my fine money. I'm a poor man but these and these people will vouch for me—as he does at the end. But this he does *not* do, as we have seen.

Now here the point which he makes here, why exile is so unattractive: because he inevitably attracts the young and thus arouses the hostility of their fathers and other relatives. Now let us see here, there is again another point made by Burnet which might help. The young would follow him "of their own accord. . . . I do not understand the difficulties which have been raised about this sentence. It is in no way inconsistent with the fact that many Athenian fathers were ready to give evidence in favor of Socrates to say that the elders of another city would resent his talking to their sons."[xiv] (Burnet 1964, 239) Well, what do you say to that? The point is that Socrates doesn't say that other cities are worse or better than Athens. In Athens,[24] the majority of the fathers and relatives were also against Socrates, as you see. In other words, how many Athenian fathers and relatives were in favor of Socrates? There is a list given, which we have seen before in 34a7 following, where there were altogether twelve people, which is not very much in a city of many, many thousands. In other cities it is in a way worse, because in other cities he doesn't have some acquaintances from childhood on, family relations and so on. Hence exile is out of the question. In the *Crito*, he will discuss the question of exile again, but that time it is a question of illegal exile, meaning running away from prison and from Athens. We must see how Socrates argues regarding exile there.

Now this statement about the old and the young: the young follow him and it would be of no use to drive them away; and the old ones then would act against Socrates. I think one can say that in the *Crito*, as I hope to show later, an alternative is indicated but not followed up. What should Socrates do, I mean, assuming that he would escape from prison illegally? He could go either to Thessaly—far away, but a very wild country, very anarchic country, and then there life would be

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[xiv] Ellipses in the quotation indicate that Strauss omitted part of the text in his reading.

unpleasant because of the wild character of the life there—or he could go to lawabiding cities nearby, like Thebes, but there he would be known as a fugitive from justice, which is not a good position to be in either.[25] But then the question arises: Could there not be a lawabiding city far away? And this condition is met by the island of Crete. Now Socrates, then, if he had escaped from prison, he would have gone to Crete. And I believe this possibility, this very ironical possibility of course, is at the basis of Plato's *Laws*, where an old Athenian stranger has come to the island of Crete and talks there to old men about the improvement of the Cretan laws. Now here we find this passage, where the Athenian stranger says (I'll read to you in the translation, all right):

> whether men are right or wrong in their censures of the Laconian polity and the Cretan—that's another story; anyhow, what is actually said by most men I, probably, am in a better position to state than either of you. [The two others are an old Cretan and an old Spartan—LS] For in your case (your laws being wisely framed) one of the best of your laws will be that which enjoins then that none of the youth shall inquire which laws are wrong and which are right, but all shall decree[xv] in unison, with one mouth and one voice, that all are rightly established because they are divinely established[xvi], and shall turn a deaf ear to anyone who says otherwise; and further, that if any old man has any stricture to pass on any of your laws, he must not utter such views in the presence of any young [man], but before a magistrate or one of his own age. . . . Well, there are no young people with us now; so we may be permitted by the lawgiver, old as we are, to discuss these matters among ourselves privately without offense.[xvii]

So there is a possibility of Socrates having gone away from Athens to converse only with old people, and the complete absence of any young ones. Now, this only in passing. Good. And where were we now?[26] We come now to the final proposal.

Mr. Reinken: "Perhaps someone might say, 'Socrates—'" (37e3)

LS: No, let us stop here. This phrase has occurred before. You may remember in 20c4, he said "one of you might say."[xviii] (20c5), and in 28b3, he says, "someone might say." (28b2) This "someone" was what you called the lout. And so let us see[27] what the bearing and purport of this objection is here. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Socrates, can you not go away from us and live quietly, without talking?' Now this is the hardest thing to make some of you believe." (37e3-37e6)

LS: Ya, in other words, this is again a cowardly proposal[28], just as the proposal in 28b3 was cowardly.

[xv] In original (Loeb edition): "declares"
[xvi] In original: "by divine enactment"
[xvii] Plato, *Laws*, trans. R. G. Bury (London: Harvard University Press, 1965), 634d3-635a7. The ellipses in the quotation indicate that Strauss omitted a statement by Clinias in his reading.
[xviii] "someone might rejoin" in Loeb edition

Mr. Reinken: "For if I say that such conduct would be disobedience to the god and that therefore I cannot keep quiet, you will think I am jesting and will not believe me; and—" (37e6-38a1)

LS: Ya, "you will not believe me by regarding me as speaking ironically." Or if you want to be a bit more literal[29], there is the word "irony,"[30] "by regarding me as dissembling." So in other words, Socrates (addressing here the whole jury, naturally) says that the judges regard the story of the Delphic oracle as ironical, i.e., as untrue. Now let us here again see what Burnet has to say:

> The words *eirōn*, *eirōneia*, *eirōneuomai* are only used of Socrates by his opponents, and have always an unfavorable meaning. [I think that is in the main correct—LS] The *eirōn* is a[xix] man who shirks responsibility by sly excuses (such as the Socratic profession of ignorance). [Now, that is[31] somewhat too narrow—LS] Observe that the court is not for a moment expected to take the oracle very seriously, though they knew well enough it had actually been delivered. Socrates is serious enough; but when he speaks of 'disobedience to God', really thinking of something very different from the oracle-mongering of Delphi. (Burnet 1964, 239)

Now what do you say to that? Socrates's reference to the Delphic oracle of course cannot be taken seriously, we know, but how does Burnet know that the judges knew that the oracle had actually been delivered? [LS taps on the table for emphasis] You see the dogmatism here. How can he know that?[32] The only evidence we have for that oracle is here in the *Apology*. How can we know that, and especially if Socrates had such a contempt for the oracle as he says? Could he not—well, or could not Chaerephon have[33] made a joke about it, and so that Socrates believed it, but could not also Socrates have made it up? It is an amazing way of arguing which we find here. So this is I think the strongest statement making clear the irrelevance of the Delphic oracle. And[34] so it is of no use, Socrates says, that I would say that the god (of course meaning Apollo) demands from him that he does not keep quiet, but buttonholes everyone he meets the whole day. Now?

Mr. Reinken: "and if again I say that to talk every day about virtue and the other things about which you hear me talking and examining myself and others is the greatest good to man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you will believe me still less. This is as I say, gentlemen, but it is not easy to convince you." (38a1-38a7)

LS: Ya, now here Socrates gives[35] the true reason why he can't keep quiet, the true reason for which the story of the Delphic oracle is an exoteric substitute necessary because, incredible as the story of the Delphic oracle is, it is more credible to the many than what Socrates says here: that it is the greatest good, or at least a very great good, for men to make every day speeches about virtue and the other things. Which other things we don't know. He adds immediately "about which you hear me converse." This is the true reason. It's a very great good for man to

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[xix] In original: "the"

make speeches about virtue, not to *act* virtuously. That's also a great good, but not as great as making speeches. Why? Why can making speeches about virtue seems to be an easy thing compared with acting virtuously? Why can Socrates nevertheless say it is a very great good to make speeches about virtue? Yes?

Student: Well, you'd be teaching virtue to other people that might endanger themselves. It's[36] really not that simple.

LS: Ya, but perhaps it is more difficult to know the reasons for good acting than for acting well. Think of a nice kid who obeys his parents, and well,[37] there is no intellectual effort required. He may have to overcome appetites, but that's all. But to understand the reasons, that requires a high intellectual effort. So in acting well, a certain control of our passions is needed, but no exertion of the mind, of the intellect; and therefore[38] making speeches is higher. You see that when Socrates gives here this true statement about his life and[39] the principle of his life, he does not say now that he examines everyone as he did, for example, in 36c5. And he gives here also clearly the reason why he told the story of the Delphic oracle, because this true reason is still less credible to them than the Delphic story. Now this clear juxtaposition of the story of the Delphic oracle and the true reason occurs, as one might expect, in the center part of the *Apology* because that is the most important point. Yes, let us complete this now.

Mr. Reinken: "Besides, I am not accustomed to think that I deserve anything bad. If I had money, I would have proposed a fine, as large as I could pay; for that would have done me no harm. But as it is—I have no money, unless you are willing to impose a fine which I could pay. I might perhaps pay a mina of silver. So I propose that penalty—" (38a7-38b4)

LS: [40]Now Socrates returns[41] [to] the question[42] of what punishment he deserves, the only relevant question after he had been condemned, and the question that he had not answered before. He returns to it after he has made clear that his estimate of himself, and hence the proposal of the reward which followed from that estimate, is not intelligible to his judges. After he made clear[43] [that] the estimate that he deserves well of the Athenians is based either on the Delphic oracle story that he fulfills the mission imposed on him by Apollo, or on making the speeches about virtue and so on being a very great good,[44] they are not intelligible to the Athenians and therefore he must now come back to the point. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "but Plato here, men of Athens, and Crito and Critobulus, and Apollodorus tell me to propose a fine of thirty minas, saying that they are sureties for it. So I propose a fine of that amount, and these men, who are amply sufficient, will be my sureties." (38b5-38c1)

LS: Yes. Now this, as Burnet points out (I know very little about the thing), was a very large sum of money which he proposed.[45] There is nothing nasty in that proposal but[46], as I said, he could have made this proposal right at the beginning of this part of the speech and then it would not have been provocative. These four men whom he mentions here[47] were mentioned before when he spoke of the people connected with him and thinking highly of him: Plato, Critobulus, and Apollodorus being young people; and Crito being the father of Critobulus, a man of Socrates's own age. Now this story[48] which we have here is important for understanding a

section of Plato's *Republic*, in the First Book, when Socrates's controversy or discussion with Thrasymachus is an imitation of this scene because Thrasymachus, at a certain point of the discussion, says: I want money from you,[49] Socrates, if I'm going to teach you. And Socrates says, of course: I ain't got no money—as he says here. And then at this moment, Plato's brother, Glaucon, vouches for whatever Thrasymachus might demand.[xx] So there is a certain similarity between Thrasymachus's demand and what in fact the city demands. But this goes deeper because[50] Thrasymachus begins his discussion with Socrates by forbidding certain answers to the question of what is justice, just as here there are certain forbidden answers which Socrates therefore may not give, namely, say that Apollo is not a true god, and so on and so on. But this only in passing. So we have now completed our reading of the center section of the *Apology* and we can now turn to the last section. But is there any question regarding this point now? Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: How do we know that the offer to supply Socrates with the fine was not made until the very end of this part of the speech? Perhaps[51] he kept speaking and finally these people decided to give him the money, but earlier he couldn't have proposed accepting the fine because he couldn't pay it.

LS: Well, there is no trace of any private conversation between Socrates and his friends, so this proposal that they would vouch for him must have been made before. They must have talked about what Socrates should propose. And that is simple. I think there is no trace of it. I mean, the question whether this is a historical fact that, you know, that Plato and the others made this offer, is unanswerable. That we don't know. It doesn't make any difference, for the same reason for which something well invented[52] can be more instructive than the merely true, factually true. Yes?

Mr. Fielding: Is it not somewhat astounding that Socrates makes the claim that the youth in other cities will drive him out or persuade their fathers to drive him out if he does not converse with them?

LS: [53]Well, why does he do that?

Mr. Fielding: Well, the first thing this brings to mind is that it indicates their devotion or their attachment to—

LS: Ya, this we know already, this we know from Athens, but I think he says it in order to make clear how innocent he is. It's not his fault if they come. He is willing to drive them away, but then it would have the same bad consequence for him then, if he talks to them and the fathers get angry at him.

Mr. Fielding: Well, could he not talk then in such a way as to indicate to them that he could not talk with them? That is to say, could he not educate—

[xx] *Republic* 337d.

LS: Ya, but still, would they not also be angry in that case? If someone wants something from somebody else and he gives all kinds of apologies, excuses, the other fellow will still be disappointed and maybe angry. That wouldn't help.

Mr. Reinken: You have the *Theages* as an example where he had to make fairly elaborate escape, and the *daimonion* itself was necessary for—

LS: [54]Well, this will work in some cases, you see; but apparently in the case of Theages it worked because it was a kind of brimstone rhetoric which was helpful there but which wouldn't help for the other cases. They were from upstate. [Laughter] They had a special—yes?

Mr. Shulsky: In that section where he describes what would happen to him if he were exiled, he says that if he talks to the young men their fathers and relatives would drive him out for the sake of the young men.

LS: Ya.

Mr. Shulsky: In other words, he's in a way imputing to the fathers a somewhat better motive than he had done before. Before he said that it was the people who were cross-examined by the followers [who] were made ashamed and—

LS: That is true. In other words—

Mr. Shulsky: Here, he admits in a way that he is corrupting them worse—

LS: [55]Well, not necessarily corrupting them. But it is a point which Xenophon makes in a passage to which I referred earlier. The fathers were envious. The fathers want to be respected in their family; they want to be the authority at home. That's perfectly normal and necessary. But if some other fellow comes in and is looked up to by the sons more than the father, then you can understand that the fathers might not like it. It's a kind of jealousy. But jealousy can lead to all kinds of violence, as you know if not from life at least from the movies. Yes?

Student: How do you arrive at your positioning of this at the center notion? Numerically, or—

LS: No, that's very simple. First, there is the speech of defense. And after that is concluded, there is a vote, and after the vote Socrates makes another speech about the degree of punishment, because that was not settled. And after this was settled the Athenians have to decide about the degree of punishment, whereupon Socrates makes another speech. One, two, three, in which the second is obviously in the center. It is not in terms of length in the center; that would be something else. Mr. Bloom? I'm sorry—Mr. Londow.

Student: I was just wondering why you said the remark about the things of the city and the city itself doesn't refer to the . . . .

LS: Ya, but, in other words, the city itself is the soul of the city, ya. But still, all right, the question would arise here: How can you have a soul of the city if you do not have first a city, I mean a city which is able to survive?[56] I mean, this has of course its parallels in the life of the individual; I'm aware of that. But this one could say.[57] But there is a somewhat difficult implication in the thought [that] the city, in the sense of the soul of the city as distinguished from its possessions, its honor, and so on and so on, for the very simple reason[58] [that] the soul of the city would then be not merely the city but the body, the regime, ya?—the regime—and this would lead then to the infinite questions of loyalty, because loyalty is not simply loyalty to the city or to the country, but loyalty to the regime of the country. For example, a communist might say[59] he is loyal to the United States but only because of the promise which the United States holds out to become communist. Well, his plea of loyalty would not be recognized, and quite reasonably, because in every time and in every country, loyalty means never loyalty to the mere country, the mere territory, or anything else, but it means to the life-giving spirit, to the regime. And therefore the city itself would then be the regime of the city, and this would lead to infinite questions in the case of Socrates precisely because he did not approve of the democracy as then understood—election by lot and so on.

Student: Well, then could I ask what do you understand him to be referring to when he makes that distinction?

LS: Perhaps he refers to the problem of the regime. But it is surely a difficult passage, I would say. Yes?

Student: One thing I don't understand is, in that part where he discusses what he deserves, and he decides that it's free board in the town hall. Then you commented that since he hadn't convinced the Athenians, just as the athlete [who] hadn't won the race, that really he didn't deserve that. How can those things be reconciled?

LS: No. Well, there are two different points. Let me make clear the one which you overlook, and that is that Socrates says he deserves this honor more than the victors at Olympia because the victors at Olympia only make the Athenians apparently happy, whereas he makes them actually happy. Ya, but if he makes them actually happy, that means[60] he makes them actually virtuous. But this is of course not the case; otherwise they would not accuse and condemn him. And therefore he is not comparable to the victors at Olympia who, however low that may be, at least achieve that low thing, whereas Socrates did not achieve that high thing as he himself admits.[61] Therefore it is a particularly absurd proposal, and therefore a particularly provocative proposal. If he had made the commonsensical pedestrian proposal [of] a fairly high fine, vouched for by these wealthy men, there would have been nothing obnoxious about that and everything might be all right. But he did not do that.[62] There is a lot of provocation throughout the work. And how to understand that is of course another matter. Yes?

Mr. Fielding: I'm sorry to ask the same question again, but it does seem that Socrates's comment about the youth here implies here that the Cretan law proposed in the *Laws* won't work, namely, that old men will only talk with old men.

LS: Why?

Mr. Fielding: I mean, the youth will break in.

LS: Oh, no. No, that was not 1966 in the United States, or Britain, or any other country, but that was in the olden times. [Laughter] Young people had to obey, and there was a simple practical means for that, and that [was that] most people were dependent financially on their fathers. And as a very wise man once said: This is no small tie on children [laughter] that you can give more of your property to one child than to the other. You know who said that.[xxi]

Student: Locke.

LS: [63]Yes, and therefore[64] today the young people earn money; they are financially independent—they may earn much more money than their poor parents. And therefore, this fact alone changes the situation radically. In former times, the influence lay with the *older* people, not necessarily the old, but with the older people but by a kind of reasoning, with the oldest people. Very simply: if the good is the old, the traditional, then those nearest to the sources of the tradition, i.e., the oldest, are more respectable than those who have not yet been molded properly by the tradition. Elementary. And therefore this argument is of no help—and especially in these old-fashioned Doric states, Sparta and Crete, the old had much greater authority than in Athens[65], [which was] very sophisticated and sometimes on the verge of disintegration. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: Well,[66] Socrates in the *Republic* waits until Cephalus has left before he really discusses the nature [of justice]—

LS: That is not quite correct. Cephalus leaves [laughter] without—Socrates doesn't have to wait, although he says he loves to listen to speeches, that bores him very much. He is an old man and[67] he prefers to bring his sacrifice—in plain English, to slaughter an animal so that they can have a dinner, which will not be given to the others who listen to the speeches. Socrates doesn't wait for him, but it so happens that is one of these acts of chance in which the Platonic dialogues are so rich.

Mr. Schaefer: But doesn't that imply that it would be very difficult to carry on what Socrates proposes in the *Laws*, which is to discuss the questions that he wants to discuss—

LS: Yes, that is quite true, but that doesn't mean that Socrates has some good luck on his side. And perhaps because of his demonic character, his power of divination, he divined that old Cephalus will not stay long when they begin to discuss. That is very likely.[68] Now we come to the last part of the dialogue: Socrates's speech after he was condemned to death. Well, let us first read a bit and then we'll see. The beginning.

Mr. Reinken:

[xxi] John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, sections 72, 73.

> It is no long time, men of Athens, which you gain, and for that those who wish to cast a slur upon the state will give you the name and blame of having killed Socrates, a wise man; for, you know, those who wish to revile you will say I am wise, even though I am not. Now if you had waited a little while, what you desire would have come to you of its own accord; for you see how old I am, how far advanced in life and how near death. I say this not to all of you, but to those who voted for my death. (38c2-38d1)

LS: Now let us stop here for a moment and see. First, there are some remarks by Burnet.

> Wilamowitz agrees with Schanz [two famous classical scholars—LS] that this third speech is pure fiction. He thinks that Socrates would not have been allowed to speak; and that the judges[xxii], especially those who had voted for his condemnation, would not have stayed to listen if he had. This contention appears to me groundless. Even in an ordinary case there must have been many formalities before a condemned man was finally handed over to the magistrates concerned,[xxiii] and this was not an ordinary case. [And another point—LS]: for no one had expected the death sentence.

Now I think he is quite right against Wilamowitz and Schanz, saying that their contention is groundless, but he makes the same kind of mistake: How can he know that no one had expected the death sentence on the basis of a purely hypothetical reconstruction of the political situation in 399? Generally speaking, it is impossible to draw the line between truth and fiction in Plato's *Apology*, except such crude facts that Socrates was accused and was condemned, and [that] this and this was roughly the content of the charge. But beyond that it is very hard to say.[69] Burnet goes on: "I do not attach importance to the fact that Xenophon also makes Socrates deliver a speech after his condemnation; for that need only mean that he had read Plato's *Apology*. It does, however, show that he saw no impossibility in the situation, and he is as good a judge of that as Schanz and Wilamowitz." (Burnet 1964, 241-242) [Laughter] Very generous.

Now this favorable judgment on Xenophon here in Burnet is quite remarkable [laughter] because his general view of Xenophon is that Xenophon was a retired colonel[70] who didn't understand anything of philosophy and of Socrates's philosophy. And then he is of course confronted with the question: But how [did] this particular colonel [become] so attracted [to] Socrates?[71] And then he gives a reason which refutes the whole position of Burnet in my opinion. He says he was attracted to Socrates because of Socrates's *military* reputation. [Laughter] Now we know something about Socrates's military exploits, but all that we know about it, we know from Plato: from the drunken Alcibiades' speech at the end of the *Banquet*, from certain remarks of Laches in the *Laches*, and so on. Xenophon doesn't say a word about Socrates's military exploits. If he had been that kind of man, he would have indulged in that. And what is perhaps as important, Xenophon gives, twice, lists of Socrates's virtues: courage, manliness, *andrea*, never occurs in that. Now this doesn't mean that Socrates[72] was not a courageous man, but it means courage[73] and manliness as ordinarily understood was not a virtue of Socrates. Incidentally, these lists of

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[xxii] In original: "Dicasts"
[xxiii] In original: "the Eleven"

virtues[74] are used here—a rule of reading, which is important in the case of all very careful writers, namely, that, colloquially stated, it is important to read not only what is there, but also what ain't there. Now in the case of Xenophon,[75] for example, that is very simple because he gives lists, say, of virtues; and then when he speaks about a given individual[76] and he praises him very highly, you have only to see which virtues are omitted. Or to give an example which is most accessible at the beginning of his Expedition of Cyrus, the *Anabasis*, he says that when [his army of] soldiers[77] came to a city that was big, inhabited, and happy, i.e., wealthy. And then he later on says that they came to another city that was big. Then you know already [laughter] that it was not inhabited, the people had run away, and it was poor. In some cases he even says so, that the inhabitants had run away. So that is, the general principle of Xenophon at any rate is not to say, not to use words of blame, [but] to be as nice in speaking about people as you can. Well, there are limits to that: when he comes to speak of Meno (we have seen last quarter), then he can't use words of praise[78], although this is a specialty of Xenophon; but[79] the general thing, that one must also consider what is not said, what is absent as much as what is present, applies of course to Plato as well. So now this was as we have seen at the end of this speech read by Mr. Reinken hitherto. Read perhaps the last sentence again.

Mr. Reinken: "I say this not to all of you, but to those who voted for my death. And to them also I have something else to say." (38c10-38d2)

LS: Ya, now wait. So in other words, here Socrates makes clear that this part of the speech is addressed to Socrates's condemners. Here in the last part the *Apology* has a perfectly lucid plan, as it had in the first section, as we have seen; the only difficulty was this section after the dialogue with Meletus. This is perfectly clear. Yes. Now[80] what is the first point he makes now?

Mr. Reinken:

> Perhaps you think, gentlemen, that I have been convicted through lack of such words as would have moved you to acquit me, if I had thought it right to do and say everything to gain an acquittal. Far from it. And yet it is through a lack that I have been convicted, not however a lack of words, but of impudence and shamelessness, and of willingness to say to you such things as you would have liked best to hear. You would have liked to hear me wailing and lamenting and doing and saying many things which are, as I maintain, unworthy of me—such things as you were[xxiv] accustomed to hear from others. But I did not think at the time that I ought, on account of the danger I was in, to do anything unworthy of a free man, nor do I now repent of having made my defence as I did, but I much prefer to die after such a defence than to live after a defence of the other sort. For neither in the court nor in war ought I or any other man to plan to escape death by every possible means. In battles it is often plain that a man might— (38d2-39a3)

LS: Ya, but more literally: "for in battles too."

[xxiv] In original: "are"

Mr. Reinken: "For in battles too[xxv] a man might avoid death by throwing down his arms and begging mercy of his pursuers." (39a2-39a4)

LS: In other words, "in battles too" because there you would all grant that one must not demean oneself, but before a law court you do not grant it.

Mr. Reinken:

> and there are many other means of escaping death in dangers of various kinds if one is willing to do and say anything. But, gentlemen, it is not hard to escape death; it is much harder to escape wickedness, for that runs faster than death. And now I, since I am slow and old, am caught by the slower runner, and my accusers, who are clever and quick, by the faster, wickedness. And now I shall go away convicted by you and sentenced to death, and they go convicted by truth of villainy and wrong. And I abide by my penalty, and they by theirs. Perhaps these things had to be so, and I think they are well. (39a5-39b7)

LS: Ya, now let us stop here. This is the center part of his speech addressed to his condemners. His point is here again the same which he made against that coward, the lout as we called it: disgrace is worse than death. His sense of honor prevented him from appealing to the pity of the judges. His condemners were hurt by his pride, which showed itself especially in his proposal of punishment, namely, of a reward. They would have been appeased if he had disgraced himself by crawling before them. He does not say here that appealing to pity is an attempt to make his judges commit perjury, as he had said before. In a way, he attracts here the very beginning of the *Apology*, namely, when he says: Not for lack of words, not for lack of speeches (one should always[81] translate here properly). He could have spoken cleverly if he wanted; he could have deceived the Athenians. You may remember a discussion we had at the beginning, whether Socrates could have spoken cleverly if he wanted or whether he was unable. Here[82] it is settled. He makes now a distinction between the condemners and the accusers at the end of this speech. You see, the disgrace falls less upon the followers, of course, than upon the leaders. Good. And now we come to the third and last part, addressed to the condemners.

Mr. Reinken: "And now I wish to prophesy to you, O ye who have condemned me." (39c1-39c2)

LS: "And now after this"—in other words, a clear division. Then, yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> for I am now at the time when most do prophesy, the time just before death. And I say to you, ye men who have slain me, that punishment will come upon you straightway after my death, far more grievous in sooth than the punishment of death which you have meted out to me. For now you have done this to me because you hoped that you would be relieved from rendering an account of your lives, but I say that you will find the result far different. Those who will force you

[xxv] In original: "in battles it is often plain that"

> to give an account will be more numerous than heretofore; men whom I restrained, though you knew it not; and they will be harsher, inasmuch as they are younger, and you will be more annoyed. For if you think that by putting men to death you will prevent anyone from reproaching you because you do not act as you should, you are mistaken. That mode of escape is neither possible at all nor honourable, but the easiest and most honourable escape is not by suppressing others, but by making yourselves as good as possible. So with this prophesy to you who condemned me I take my leave. (39c2-39e1)

LS: Yes. Now Socrates prophesies that out of his bones, at least out of his youthful followers,[83] his avenger will come up, as a Virgilian verse: "may there[84] come an avenger out of my bones."[xxvi] Well, we can imagine who this avenger of Socrates is especially. Who do you think?

Student: Plato.

LS: Plato, more than anybody else. Now there is here an oath "by Zeus," as you have seen in 39c5. Apart from that—which is the last oath in the book—there is nothing of the gods in the speech against the condemners, nor does he speak here of conversing with them. Good. And[85] at this point there begins a speech to the acquitters to which we must turn now, unless you have a question. Yes?

Mr. Bolotin: You made the point a couple of weeks ago about how important it was that Socrates was biologically very young. But here we see that he says he would have died very shortly. Do you see what I—

LS: Well,[86] [do these] contradict each other?

Mr. Bolotin: Maybe not; I don't know.

LS: Well, I don't know. We don't have a medical expert, but[87] you are all scientists here. [Laughter] I see. Good. Apparently this goes together. Good.

Mr. Reinken: "But with those who voted for my acquittal I should like to converse about this which has happened, while the authorities are busy and before I go to the place where I must die. Wait with me so long, my friends; for nothing prevents our—" (39e2-39e6)

LS: But he doesn't say [88]friends; [he says] "you men," *andres*.

Mr. Reinken: men, "you men[xxvii]; for nothing prevents our chatting with each other while there is time. I feel—" (39e 5-40a 1).

[xxvi] Virgil, *Aeneid* IV. 624-625.
[xxvii] In original: "my friends"

LS: Now let us stop here. So he would gladly converse with them, *dialegesthai*, but he will only what he[xxviii] translates "chatting," *diamythologai*. Well, just as the word for conversing [LS writes on the blackboard], *dialegesthai*, is akin to *logos*, this word which he uses now, what he will do, is akin to *mythos*. So there will not be a *logos* here. He would love to converse with them but somehow the occasion is not the right one. Instead there will be a kind of myth-telling, even a reciprocal myth-telling, in this section. One could say, perhaps, with a view to this *huper* in e1, for those who know Greek: no conversing in favor of the condemnation, but a telling of myth in favor of the condemnation, i.e., in favor of dying. And that is indeed what will happen here. Now?

Mr. Reinken: "I feel that you are my friends, and I wish to show you the meaning of this which has now happened to me. For, judges—and in calling you judges I give you your right name—" (40a1-40a4)

LS: Now this "judges" is an ordinary address to the jury, which he had never used before because he didn't recognize them as judges. But here in this case, in the case of the acquitters, he says they deserve to be called judges. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "a wonderful thing has happened to me. For hitherto the customary prophetic monitor who[xxix] always spoke to me very frequently—" (40a4-40a6)

LS: Ya, now "the customary divination of the *daimonion*."

Mr. Reinken: "divination of the *daimonion*[xxx] always spoke to me very frequently and opposed me even in very small matters, if I was going to do anything I should not; but now, as you yourselves see, this thing which might be thought, and is generally considered, the greatest of evils has come upon me; but the divine sign did not oppose me—" (40a 6-40a 11).

LS: No, the divine—"the sign of the god." Let us translate it that way.

Mr. Reinken:

> the sign of the god[xxxi] did not oppose me either when I left my home in the morning, or when I came here to the court, or at any point of my speech, when I was going to say anything; and yet on other occasions it stopped me at many points in the midst of a speech; but now, in this affair, it has not opposed me in anything I was doing or saying. What then do I suppose is the reason? I will tell you. This which has happened to me is doubtless a good thing, and those of us who think death is an evil must be mistaken. A convincing proof of this has been given me; for the accustomed sign would surely have opposed me if I had not been going to meet with something good. (40a11-40c4)

[xxviii] H. N. Fowler.
[xxix] "who" not in original.
[xxx] In original: "the customary prophetic monitor"
[xxxi] In original: "the divine sign"

LS: Ya. Now let us stop here for one moment. So here he identifies the *daimonion* with the sign of the god, and it is in favor of Socrates's dying. But this causes a difficulty, because we have seen that the general function of the *daimonion* was rather to preserve Socrates's life, whereas the Delphic oracle of *the* god led Socrates without any compunction into mortal danger. Now the *daimonion* is identified here, as I said, with the sign of the god, i.e., the oracle. There is no difficulty[89] here, as you could see by looking up again 33c4 to 7. Now there is a point here where we can learn something again from Burnet, ya, that is a point which Burnet makes frequently. He says, when he speaks of the *daimonion*: "we see clearly that only the nature of the consequences is in question, i.e., the moral questions are not decided by the *daimonion*, but only the expedient." Yes?

Student: Does it follow from this passage that Socrates had in fact courted death throughout the entire speech[90] [of] his[91] apology?

LS: Yes. In a way, yes. We can, we must take this up on another occasion. Now good; that has only to do with the consequences, all right—with matters of expediency, not of morality, one would say today. But what is one of these effects of the *daimonion* we see now is that the *daimonion* sometimes opposed itself to things Socrates was going to say, not only to actions. [92]"Don't go there," and that meant it should go elsewhere or stay here; "don't stay here" means leave this place. But the *daimonion* prevented Socrates frequently from saying things with a view to the bad consequences of saying them. I see no difficulty in that, but I believe Burnet has not considered this point: that Socrates had in himself a regulator, as it were, preventing him from saying inexpedient things. Good. Yes?

Student: When he talks about the sign of the god, is [93]the sign of the god the sign of the Delphic oracle?

LS: What else should it be? But it is not certain, it's not explicitly identified.

Same student: If it were—

LS: But if it were, we have here the interesting case where both the Delphic oracle and the *daimonion* agree. Now, we will find an answer to that question later on in the *Apology*, but here it is an open question.

Mr. Bolotin: I don't understand what you're saying about the *daimonion*. Do you agree with Burnet's point that the *daimonion* is concerned only with . . . .

LS: Yes, I indicated my disagreement by questioning the distinction between morality and expediency, I mean, because that is not so simple to draw that line because we are supposed to act decently in the circumstances, and that always implies considerations of expediency. If you do the right thing in such a way that it will do harm and confuse other people, then perhaps you should not do it, you know? I mean we are accustomed, especially in this country, to think in terms of the simple: here is morality, and here is expedienc; and if something is done for reasons

of expediency some people think that it is not done decently. The older view was that the consideration of the circumstances is as important as the overall principle which you follow,[94] and therefore expediency belongs very much to the moral consideration. You have a responsibility for those consequences which you can foresee, [but] not for those which no one can foresee[95]. And this is the meaning of prudence in the older[96] [sense], still noticeable in our present use of the term. Good.

Now this was the first part of the speech to the acquitters. Now we come to the second part.

Mr. Reinken: "Let us consider in another way also how good reason there is to hope that it is a good thing." (40c4-40c5)

LS: Namely, to die, that Socrates dies. So now that's the second reason: "in the following manner." Now he proved that the death is good independently of the silence of the *daimonion*, that was the first argument. That the *daimonion* did not prevent him from going to the court, hence it was good for him to go to the court and so on. And it also did not oppose his speeches which he made and which were so provocative. After all, the *daimonion* watching over Socrates's self-preservation would have objected quite frequently, [but there is] nothing of the case. That was argument number one. Now we come to argument number two. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "For the state of death is one of two things: either it is virtually nothingness, so that the dead has no consciousness of anything, or it is, as people say, a change and migration of the soul from this to another place." (40c5-40c10)

LS: Now let us stop here. Now this disjunction is important. Either death is like being nothing, nor having any feeling, [any] sense of anything; or else the other alternative is transmigration to another place. Death as annihilation, as you will see, is not considered; what is considered is only lack of consciousness. There is also not considered, which is very important in a Platonic work, the possibility of *metempsychosis*, transmigration of the soul to another body.[97] What is considered here only is the transmigration from here to there, i.e., to Hades. So the disjunction is by no means complete, and when Socrates says at the beginning that he will[98] say a myth, *mythos*, not a *logos*, that is quite correct because it is not a logos, not strictly. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> And if it is unconsciousness, like a sleep in which the sleeper does not even dream, death would be a wonderful gain. For I think if any one were to pick out that night in which he slept a dreamless sleep and, comparing with it the other nights and days of his life, were to say, after due consideration, how many days and nights in his life had passed more pleasantly than that night,—I believe that not only any private person, but even the great King of Persia himself would find that they were few in comparison with the other days and nights. So if such is the nature of death, I count it a gain; for in that case, all time seems to be no longer than one night. (40c10-40e5)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Now I said before [that] Socrates does not consider simple annihilation, and hence also not whether fear of death as fear of annihilation is not something very different from fear of such a condition, for example, or fear of Hades. Now[99] this argument here, which we just read, is in agreement with the view that human life is of no worth. Of no worth.[100] You remember what he said, how low we are in regard to wisdom; and therefore, not to have any activity, especially any activity of thinking, is a nice condition—can very well be a nice condition, the condition of being completely asleep. And you must also observe the use of the vulgar notion that the King of Persia is singularly happy, which is here presupposed[101]. What do you say about this argument? To spend an infinite or an almost infinite time in dreamless sleep would be a wonderful and desirable condition. Is this in agreement with what Socrates had said earlier?

Mr. Reinken: The supremely unexamined life.

LS: Exactly, now and even sleep occurs, the Athenians are also not—yes?

Student: Didn't he one time criticize the Athenians for saying they wanted to be in a state of sleep?

LS: Ya, sure, and that the gadfly awakens them. Sure. Now this is not—but, yes?

Student: Are we not to make a distinction between the Athenians being supposedly alive and this being a state of death, so that sleep may be necessarily pitiful for one who . . . but it is necessarily pitiful for one who is alive, and for one who is dead it may not necessarily be so.

LS: Ya, but still compared with living, with being alive, the question is: What is better, to be alive or dead? And then if being dead means to be in a condition of a dreamless sleep, then the question is whether a dreamless sleep of very long or infinite duration is not better[102] [than] a state of being awake. That is the question.

Same student: Would then it be possible that somebody might envision a state of sleep and death as being much better than living, if living is defined in this case by the Athenians as well, as a kind of sleep too?[103]

LS: As defined by the Athenians?

Same student: I think Socrates here is faced with two alternatives: either he has to live or he has to die.[104] To live he must conform with the limits set down by the Athenians, and this is to be asleep while being alive.

LS: Ya, but not quite because he was very much awake. He tried to make the Athenians awake, and that led to his said downfall, to his death. No, surely one must consider that question whether a state of complete dormancy is not better than a state of living. Surely. But the question which we can simply answer is only this: Did Socrates possibly believe that? And the answer on the very basis of this apology is: No, Socrates regarded a life of self-examination as better than a

dreamless sleep, short or long. And therefore Socrates gives another alternative, which we cannot discuss[105] now. The alternative [that] death is either [dreamless sleep is] wonderful—even the King of Persia would prefer it to his greatest banquets and so on—and then the alternative is that it means going to another place, i.e., to Hades. And then Socrates says even that is preferable to life for reasons which he will state in the sequel, but we will take [this] up[106] next time.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "his—."

[2] Deleted "Poetry and Fiction—."

[3] Deleted "of the *Law*—."

[4] Deleted "would perhaps—one."

[5] Deleted "Therefore one—a."

[6] Deleted "proposal—."

[7] Deleted "6—."

[8] Deleted "an accusation—a—."

[9] Deleted "point—more—more—."

[10] Deleted "when Meletus says—Socrates asks Meletus who—."

[11] Deleted "So."

[12] Deleted, a brief partly inaudible exchange between Mr. Reinken and LS which seems to be about LS's coat.

[13] Deleted "as—as—."

[14] Deleted "Just—."

[15] Deleted "you remember, that he should—they should take care of the city first."

[16] Deleted "'it should not be.'"

[17] Deleted "was—."

[18] Deleted "I mention—."

[19] Deleted "one necessarily—in—."

[20] Deleted "through."

[21] Deleted "prejudices—."

[22] Deleted "now."

[23] Deleted "late—."

[24] Deleted "there were also."

[25] Deleted "And now the question—."

[26] Deleted "Yeah, now—we last—yes."

[27] Deleted "what this, what—."

[28] Deleted "Unbelievable—that he—a cowardly proposal."

[29] Deleted "is a—."

[30] Deleted "alright—."

[31] Deleted “slightly and—.”

[32] Deleted “here is no—.”

[33] Deleted “have—Chaerephon may have.”

[34] Deleted “‘therefore—.’”

[35] Deleted “now.”

[36] Deleted “more—it’s.”

[37] Deleted “he only has—there is.”

[38] Deleted “it is higher, that the—.”

[39] Deleted “his—.”

[40] Deleted “Now let us—right here.”

[41] Deleted “now.”

[42] Deleted “which he—.”

[43] Deleted “you know, after all.”

[44] Deleted “are not—.”

[45] Deleted “He could have propose—so it—what—.”

[46] Deleted “he—.”

[47] Deleted “are—.”

[48] Deleted “about—.”

[49] Deleted “‘if I—.’”

[50] Deleted “what—.”

[51] Deleted “he just has—.”

[52] Deleted “is more—.”

[53] Deleted “No—yeah, but—.”

[54] Deleted “Yes—well, the—yeah, that—.”

[55] Deleted “Yeah—no—at least—.”

[56] Deleted “Would this—.”

[57] Deleted “Q: Would the—if—

LS: Yeah.”

[58] Deleted “because.”

[59] Deleted “well.”

[60] Deleted “he makes them—or Socrates.”

[61] Deleted “That is—.”

[62] Deleted “He goes—there—there—.”

[63] Deleted “Locke, yeah.”

[64] Deleted “you know.”

[65] Deleted “you know.”

[66] Deleted "in—in the Republic, Socrates waits to really discuss the nature of justice until—."

[67] Deleted "he would like—he—."

[68] Deleted "That's likely. Yes?

R: Put this up?

LS: Oh, I see. Good."

[69] Deleted "'I do not….' He—."

[70] Deleted "and—."

[71] Changed from "but how come that this particular colonel was so much *attracted* by Socrates?"

[72] Deleted "didn't—."

[73] Deleted "as—."

[74] Deleted "this—."

[75] Deleted "that is—."

[76] Deleted "you have to—."

[77] Deleted "they came—his army—they."

[78] Deleted "But—."

[79] Deleted "some things—."

[80] Deleted "what does it—."

[81] Deleted "make—."

[82] Deleted "that is—it is settled—it is—."

[83] Deleted "someone will—his—."

[84] Deleted "'be—and—.'"

[85] Deleted "now we come—."

[86] Deleted "does this."

[87] Deleted "do you—don't—."

[88] Deleted "of"

[89] Deleted "in."

[90] Deleted "LS: I beg your pardon?

Q: Does it—does it follow from this passage that Socrates had in fact courted death throughout the entire speech?

LS: I simply cannot acoustically get—

Q: Does it follow from this passage that Socrates had in fact courted death—[inaudible] death throughout."

[91] Deleted "entire."

[92] Deleted "that—don't go there, but go where"

[93] Deleted "is that"

[94] Deleted "You know?"

[95] Deleted "but for those which you can foresee."

[96] Deleted "meaning of—."

[97] Deleted "Is—."

[98] Deleted “speak myth—.”

[99] Deleted “this agreement—.”

[100] Deleted “of no worth. Whatever men may—.”

[101] Deleted “which is—yeah, now—is this—this argument—.”

[102] Deleted “to.”

[103] Deleted “LS: Of what? Of—

R: Liberal—

Q: If by—.”

[104] Deleted “Living for him, is—.”

[105] Deleted “it.”

[106] Deleted “this.”

Session 10: November 17, 1966

Leo Strauss: The structure of the *Apology* as a whole is by now clear. It consists obviously of three main parts. Altogether the plan is very clear, as is becoming for a public speech, except in the section following the refutation of Meletus, as we have seen. This section was the one which leads up to Socrates's *daimonion* and therewith to the question of the relation between the *daimonion* and the Delphic oracle. In the central speech, the relation between the *daimonion* and the Delphic oracle is almost explicitly discussed. When Socrates raises again the question why, or presents himself as being asked the question, Why can't you keep quiet? and he gives two answers: the divine mission, i.e., the Delphic oracle compels him to be a busybody. But this answer is regarded by the judges as ironic and therefore of no use. And the second answer, which is the true reason: the greatest good for man is to examine himself and others, and the unexamined life is not worth living. This means, although the word is not used here, [that] this examining is the greatest good for man by nature.

Now we have seen the connection between the *daimonion* and *erōs* and *physis* and, positively expressed, Socrates's *erōs*, his *daimonion*, is directed towards the greatest good: what man as man by nature seeks, although it comes into its own only in very few men. A commentary on that is given in the First Book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "All men desire by nature to know,"[i] as is shown in vulgar curiosity, even. [1]But this natural desire to know has various forms, various stages, and in its highest stage it is philosophy. But owing to the fact that human nature is enslaved in many ways, as Aristotle puts it: "the needs of all kinds and the troubles of all kinds,"[ii] so that only a very few, the happily-born or the good natures, are capable of philosophy. The two reasons given by Socrates, the one referring to the Delphic oracle and the other referring to what is by nature the greatest good, are incredible to the many, as Socrates says. But the reason taken from the Delphic oracle, while incredible, is more intelligible to the many than the true ground, and therefore that is a good enough reason to use this as a basis in his presentation. It is important to see that this exoteric reason, the reason taken from the Delphic oracle and its consequences too is "quote heretical unquote," at least not in the sense that it is a punishable offense, but not credible, deviating from what is generally accepted.

Now the third and last speech, the speech after the condemnation to death, has again a clear plan: Socrates speaks first to the condemners and then to his acquitters. We have completed the discussion of the speech to the condemners. To the acquitters he makes the following point: death is good. And the first reason given is the silence of his *daimonion*, and this proves of course only that death is good for Socrates. The second is a general reason: death is good simply. And the first reason given is that—and the general argument is this: death is either a dreamless sleep or a migration toward another place. If it is a dreamless sleep it is obviously better than life, as even the Persian king with all his pomp and pleasures would admit, because even he will suffer so much during his life. For example, if he eats too much, as he is likely to do, and so on.

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[i] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 980a.

[ii] Presumably Strauss's translation or paraphrase.

Now we come now to the second alternative, which begins in 40e4 to 6.

Mr. Reinken: Page 143. "But on the other hand, if death is, as it were, a change of habitation from here to some other place, and if what we are told is true, that all the dead are there—" (40e5-40e8).

LS: Now let us stop here for one moment. The other alternative, which he begins now: all the dead go to Hades. That[2] in a way goes without saying because in the first case also all the dead would be in a state of complete coma, complete thoughtlessness, and what is more desirable than such a condition, according to this argument here. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "what greater blessing could there be, judges? For if a man when he reaches the other world, after—" (40e8-41a1)

LS: "Having arrived in Hades," let us be a bit more—

Mr. Reinken: "having arrived in Hades[iii], but[iv] after leaving behind these who claim to be judges, shall find those who are really judges who are said to sit in judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus, and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and all the other demigods who were just men in their lives, would the change of habitation be undesirable?" (40e9-41a7)

LS: Now let us stop here. Hades is of course superior, Socrates says, to life in Athens or on earth because the judges there are superior, and therefore the situation would be better. Now, but he does not make clear one point, although he implies it: Hades is attractive only for those who have lived here justly, because the others would be worse off under perfect judges. You note the repeated emphasis on that these are things which are said, i.e., Socrates in a way disclaims to know, but these are possible things based on myths. Yes. As he said at the very beginning when he said he will *diamythologai* with them, not *dialegesthai*. Now go on.

Mr. Reinken: "Or again, what would any of you give to meet with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? I am willing to die many times over, if these things are true—" (41a7-41a10)

LS: Yes, now you see here another group of four men mentioned by name. It so happens that these four are criticized in the *Republic*, 364c to e, because they teach that the gods are unjust, and in particular that they can be bribed. In other words, they are not good judges, yet Socrates prefers their company to the company of the men here. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "for I personally should find the life there wonderful, when I met Palamedes or Ajax, the son of Telamon, or any other men of old who lost their lives through an unjust judgment, and compared my experience with theirs. I think that would not be unpleasant." (41a 10-41b5)

[iii] In original: "when he reaches the other world"
[iv] "but" not in original

LS: Yes, this expression "not unpleasant," which occurred when he spoke of his examining people in Athens, that this was not unpleasant to him or [to] the young men. Here we have a group of two, Palamedes and Aias, the son of Telamon, and they are Socrates's equals because they are in the same boat as he: unjustly condemned. The first two groups, I infer for the time being, were superior to Socrates: the first four obviously because they are demigods; and also Homer and Hesiod, Orpheus and Musaeus[3] could plausibly be said to be superior to Socrates. At any rate, this would correspond to the views of the addressees. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And the greatest pleasure would be to pass my time in—" (41b5-41b6)

LS: Not "the pleasure": "the most important thing," *to megiston*.

Mr. Reinken:

> And the most important thing[v] would be to pass my time in examining and investigating the people there, as I do those here, to find out who among them is wise and who thinks he is when he is not. What price would any of you pay, judges, to examine him who led the great army against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or countless others, both men and women, whom I might mention? To converse and associate with them and examine them would be immeasurable happiness. At any rate, the folk there do not kill people for it; since, if what we are told is true they are immortal for all future time, besides being happier in other respects than men are here. (41b5-41c8)

LS: So. Now the chief reason—and that is the meaning of the words *to megiston*, which he[vi] translates wrongly—the chief reason why Hades is a nice place [is that] Socrates can continue there the life he led in Athens and improve on it by examining not ordinary men but also these famous men of the past, heroes and heroines of old. He mentions here also the women.[4] He didn't say anything of his examining women in Athens [laughter], which is quite remarkable. And of course there is no punishment for examining in Hades, and especially not capital punishment because they are all immortal there. Now here we have another group of men, the one who led the army against Troy. Who is that?

Mr. Reinken: Agamemnon.

LS: Yes, but he is not mentioned by name, and why he doesn't do it is a question. But let us see what is the consequence of that. Altogether twelve beings, men or demigods, are mentioned by name. One can say that Socrates did not mention Agamemnon because,[5] with a view to his own model, the greatest protagonist of Agamemnon was Achilles, and [it was] Achilles who said in Hades that it is better to be alive as a poor man's serf than to be king in Hades. Now when we look, why all of a sudden does he make his selection? A partial answer we can derive from the fact that there was an earlier enumeration of men in the *Apology*, in 33b to 34a. If you will return

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[v] In original: "the greatest pleasure"
[vi] H. N. Fowler.

for a moment to this passage, there Socrates mentions the people who would testify to Socrates's not having been a corrupter of the young, a list which begins with Crito and ends with Apollodorus.[6]

These are of course not twelve but altogether seventeen names, but those still alive are twelve. Let us figure it out again. "Crito here, the father of Critobulus here": two. Then "Lysanias of Sphettos, the father of Aeschines here": four. Then "Antiphon here, the father of Epigenes": six. And then Nicostratus, the father of Theodotus; but Theodotus is dead, so we have only seven. And then Paralus, whose brother was Theages, so we have eight. And then we have Adimantus, Plato, Aeantodorus, and Apollodorus. There are altogether twelve. I think that fact is undeniable, but whether it is helpful is another matter. [Laughter] And anyways—no, that is clear[7]. Well, I suppose in all branches of knowledge, we observe facts, and facts are not by themselves enlightening: they may be brute facts. But let us generalize a bit. These are twelve, in each case a dozen. The company of which dozen is preferable? Of the twelve here—of Crito and Apollodorus, and Plato, of course—or the company mentioned later on, the company in Hades? That surely would be the question, would it not? And to that extent I believe the fact that there are two dozens is helpful. Well,[8] most of you will regard it as frivolous when I say, but I say it nevertheless, that in the first list, in the list of the people who know Socrates here in Athens, the second from the end of the young people, the possible victims of Socrates's corruption, is Plato; and the second from the end in the second list is Odysseus. Now, that Plato should have some Odyssean characteristics is not in accordance with the commonly accepted view, but I think it is in accordance with the facts as presented by Plato himself. But regard this as an entirely otiose and frivolous suggestion. Good. So we are now through with the speech of Socrates to the acquitters, to his friends. Now Socrates does something very strange. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "But you also, judges, must regard death hopefully and must bear in mind this one truth, that no evil can come to a good man either in life or after death, and gods do[vii] not neglect him. So, too, this which has come to me has not come by chance, but I see plainly that it was better for me to die now and be freed from troubles." (41c9-41d6)

LS: Ya, the emphasis is altogether put on the word *now*. So this is the third point which Socrates makes to the condemners. (I made a slip before.) Death is not bad for a good *man*. He speaks strangely of *male* human beings, after having spoken of women in the other context. Death is not bad for a good man because of divine providence. [This is the] third argument. The harmony between divine providence and the *daimonion* and between the Delphic oracle and the *daimonion* is now established. Death is *now* good for Socrates—in other words, formerly, say, ten years before, it would not have been good for him. He would have been more useful in Athens. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "That is the reason why the sign never interfered with me." (41d5-41d6)

LS: Oh, I'm sorry.[9] My remark referred to this sentence, yes? Say this with—

[vii] In original: "God does"

Mr. Reinken: "That is the reason why the sign never interfered with me, and I am not at all angry with those who condemned me or with my accusers." (41d6-41d9)

LS: Ya. So in other words,[10] there is perfect harmony between the acts of the gods, the providence which they exert, and Socrates's *daimonion* regarding its being better for Socrates to die now. Formerly there was a possible conflict because Apollo's oracle, according to Socrates's description, led him to endanger his life, whereas the *daimonion* was concerned with Socrates preserving his life and therefore kept him back from politics. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> And yet it was not with that in view that they condemned and accused me, but because they thought to injure me. They deserve blame for that. However, I make this request of them: when my sons grow up, gentlemen, punish them by troubling them as I have troubled you; if they seem to you to care for money or anything else more than for virtue, and if they think they amount to something when they do not, rebuke them as I have rebuked you because they do not care for what they ought, and think they amount to something when they are worth nothing. If you do this, both I and my sons shall have received just treatment from you.
>
> But now the time has come to go away. I go to die, and you to live; but which of us goes to the better lot, is known to none but the god[viii]. (41d9-42a5)

LS: Yes. Now Socrates turns now very surprisingly again to his condemners. And so we have this structure of the last part of the *Apology*: the speech to his acquitters is surrounded on both sides by speeches to the condemners. Socrates very strangely treats his condemners—you must have observed that he uses again the second person plural—treats his condemners as his spiritual heirs, as heirs to his mission. He expects them to be the benefactors of his sons, as they were his benefactors by condemning him to death now. He does not entrust this function to his acquitters, but to his condemners.

Now at the end of this passage Socrates makes again clear that he does not know whether death is preferable to life. That he had said before, and this was somewhat overlaid by his mythical story in the speech to the acquitters. You remember, previously he had said that if someone fears death, he claims to know what he does not know, and therefore it is unreasonable to fear death. Death may be better than life, but we don't know. At the end he returns to this proposition. Now[11] we have now reached the end of our discussion of the *Apology*, and I would like to make a few points in conclusion.

There is one point which refers to a special difficulty, but which I have not stated I believe with sufficient clarity before. The first accusers, Socrates says, did not accuse him of impiety: that Socrates was impious was an inference of the listeners. And the basis of the charge of the first accusers were rumors on Socrates's physiology and rhetoric. But on the other hand, he says [that] the first accusers did accuse Socrates of impiety, and the basis of their charge was ultimately the Delphic oracle, which induced Socrates to debunk the would-be wise men in

[viii] In original: "God"

Athens; and he was imitated therein by the young people, and then these debunked people said Socrates corrupts the young. And then in their embarrassment to answer the question: By doing what does he corrupt the young? they said: Because of his impiety, or by instilling impiety in them. But there is a clear contradiction: the first accusers did not and they did accuse Socrates of impiety. The present accusers did accuse Socrates of impiety; that[12] appears clearly from the indictment. But the basis of their charge, as comes out later on, is what Socrates said about his *daimonion*, which is something different from the rumors about his being a physiologist and from the story about the Delphic oracle and its consequences.

Now I have said on another occasion that in reading books as carefully worded as those by Plato, it is important to consider not only what is mentioned but also what is not mentioned. I gave an example or examples from Xenophon last time. Now[13] I think the example I used from Xenophon was his lists of virtues, and which virtue does he not ascribe to Socrates. Now the best known list of virtues in Plato is that given in the *Republic*, the so-called four cardinal virtues. Which are they?[14]

Mr. Reinken: Wisdom, justice, temperance, fortitude.[ix]

LS: Yes. All right, yes. Now which is not mentioned in the *Apology*? And if my reading is correct (in such cases it is always necessary to check and countercheck), moderation is not mentioned, whereas the three others are mentioned. Now does it make sense that it is not mentioned in the *Apology*? What is moderation? According to the definition given in the *Charmides*, 161b, moderation consists in minding one's own business,[x] and this makes sense here. In 31b3 Socrates says: I always mind *your* business. And therefore if he always minds their business it is hard to see at first glance how he could ever mind his own business. But this is of course not sufficient because a little bit later, in 33a,[15] he admits the young people observe him minding *his* business, namely, examining the Athenians.

Now there is another and more plausible view of moderation given by Aristotle in the *Ethics*, and it is also sometimes used in Plato, where moderation means a moderate indulgence of food, drink, and other sensual pleasures. This is, one can say, the most plausible meaning. Xenophon, however, calls this virtue not moderation, *sōphrosynē*, but *egkrateia*, which we can translate by self-control. Perhaps the most important Platonic statement on moderation occurs in the dialogue *Phaedrus*, which is devoted to a certain kind of speeches, namely, erotic speeches. And accordingly it is divided into two parts: first, *erōs*; and [second][16], speeches—logos, rhetoric. Now in the section on *erōs* we have first a praise of moderate *erōs*, which is made by Socrates, which is then retracted. And then we have a praise of *manikos erōs*, of immoderate, mad *erōs*. The highest form of that manic *erōs* is philosophy. But philosophy means the attempt to discover the truth, to think. Moderation comes in as far as speech, especially public speech, is concerned. That is its proper place. Moderation is also opposed to hybris, to insolence. And a good example of insolence is of course Socrates's judgment on what he deserves after he had been declared to be guilty, and he declares himself worthy of the highest honor. That is, in the language of

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[ix] *Republic* 433a2-433c2.
[x] *Charmides* 161b6-161b7.

Aristotle, the sign of a magnanimous, of a high-minded, man: being worthy of the highest honors [and] claiming them. Now in his *Ethics* Aristotle says, and that is of some importance—so in other words it makes sense to describe Socrates of the *Apology*, and not only of the *Apology* but especially of the *Apology*, as magnanimous. And there was a thesis written many years ago, probably forty years ago, by a pupil of Werner Jaeger, Wolff,[xi] in German, which tried to show this point, and to that extent it was a sound study.

Now Aristotle says in his *Ethics* that the high-minded man is not given to praise: because of his very high standards he doesn't find much to praise. Nor is he a man who speaks evil of other men, because that's beneath him. He doesn't even speak evil of his enemies, unless out of insolence. So a certain insolence is compatible with high-mindedness. And in his *Rhetoric*, Book 2, chapter 12, [Aristotle][xii] gives this definition of *eutrapelia*, wittiness in a very high sense. It is educated insolence. Well, in idiomatic English we would perhaps say civilized insolence. And something of this kind Socrates shows indeed in the *Apology* with particular cunning. So in other words, the absence of the word *sōphrosynē* from the *Apology* is not wholly unintelligible. Socrates does not appear here as *sophron*, as moderate as it is mostly understood. Now this is all I have to say about the *Apology*, and we turn then to the *Crito*. But we have—I suppose we have some time [for a brief discussion].[17]

Mr. Reinken: Your first point established that there is a contradiction as to whether the first accusers accused him of impiety[18] [and offered no clues for its resolution].

LS: Yes. Well, we discussed that at some length and I mean, the point is there is a solution given in Plato himself, in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates on the day of his death says to his friends that in his youth he was a physiologist, and therefore the rumors about his being a physiologist, which led to suspicion of him, had a basis in fact. Now the great question of course is whether Socrates turned away from physiology, say, when he was 22 or when he was 32, or whether the old Socrates properly understood was still a physiologist, although no longer a so-called pre-Socratic. This he surely was not. But there is some—for example, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates gives a sketch of a geometric cosmology as the basis of his teaching regarding justice, which is of course also *physiologia*. And the Platonic doctrine of the cosmos, of the ideas, is naturally also physiology. So I would say the rumors regarding Socrates's *physiologia* were by no means unfounded, as even Burnet admits, only he likes to contradict himself, although not for Plato's or Socrates's reasons. I mean, his contradictions were not known to him when he made them. Yes.

Mr. Wolfowitz: You mentioned that Socrates doesn't refer explicitly to the charge that Xenophon mentions as having been brought, that he taught the youths to not have respect for the laws of the city[19], but that he alludes to it in his conversation with Meletus, where he asks Meletus if he is the only one who corrupts, is he also—

LS: Ya. Ya, but it is a very thin allusion. One has to do some thinking about it in order to see that.

[xi] Strauss may be referring to Erwin Wolff, *Platos Apologie* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1929).
[xii] Strauss says "Socrates," in error.

Mr. Wolfowitz: Is there a similar allusion to this in the conversation he recounts with Evenus in 20d, where he argues with Evenus that he should send his son to someone—

LS: You mean with Callias.

Mr. Wolfowitz: Callias, right. And Callias says that he sends his son to Evenus.

LS: No, what has this do with the laws? After all, there was no legal prohibition against having your son taught "quote culture unquote."

Mr. Wolfowitz: But Socrates says that you wouldn't let any old person teach your son the things he needs for excellence as a man and a citizen, and just as you wouldn't—

LS: Now to which passage, is this—

Mr. Wolfowitz: 20d.

LS: 20d. But is there any reference to it being forbidden to educate human beings, which is exactly what Evenus is doing?

Mr. Wolfowitz: No, but isn't he arguing, in a sense, trying to convince the man that only a few people are able to educate human beings to be good citizens?

LS: Ya, but[20] I would say [that is] in no way made explicit. You can say that it is also not made explicit in this passage to which I refer. And I reply as follows: this passage to which I referred is obscure; this here is in no way obscure. There Meletus had said the laws are the ones which improve the young. And then Socrates says: No, I don't mean that; I mean who are those who first *know* the laws? This is an obscure utterance. And of course a moment's reflection would tell him that he refers to the fact that the laws as laws are ineffective if they are not executed by human beings. But there is a great difference between executing the laws and knowing the laws, because people may know the laws and not execute them. And therefore we come back eventually to this point: that before the laws can be executed they must have been established; and this establishing of the laws is of course in a way knowing the laws, namely, first in the state of bills on which they been decided. So here the darkness of the utterance is a proper reason for looking into the problem, and then [21]one discovers the problem of the laws implied here. But in this passage about Callias there is no such inducement. In a way you can say by adducing parallels that the mere fact that only a few people claim to teach the young shows that the majority cannot educate the young. [22]To which the argument is obvious: Socrates doesn't grant that Evenus and this sophist he mentioned there are good at educating the young; therefore that is wholly beside the point. Mr. Londow?

Mr. Londow: Yes, I have three questions.

LS: Well, state them one by one.

Mr. Londow: Xenophon appears to defend Socrates against the charge that he was immoderate in speech by saying that he thought his time to die had come. In other words, that it was fitting for him to talk big, to be insolent, because he wanted to make sure that he would be condemned.

LS: In other words, Socrates's death is a kind of suicide, and a kind of suicide deliberately chosen so that it has a salutary effect, namely, that the Athenians kill him and thus will come to their senses afterward. That is I think behind Xenophon, sure. Now this is not explicit: Plato makes no such statement. On the contrary, the Platonic Socrates in the *Phaedo*, [on] the day of his death,[23] gives a long argument against suicide as incompatible with belief in providence. If gods watch us and take care of us, then it is a running away from their guardianship if we try to kill ourselves—although there is a certain difficulty here because the gods of course exert providence also in Hades. But still, he takes this view that man is put here by the gods and cannot dispose of his life as he pleases, however good or seemingly good his thesis may be. But in Xenophon this is suggested, yes. But this—you see the point. That leads to a long question to which I have alluded, the whole question of what is the principle of Xenophon's presentation in contradistinction to Plato's, and this cannot be disposed of as Burnet does—you know the cavalry captain who for some strange reason was interested in Socrates. Xenophon speaks of the immortality question but characteristically not in his Socratic writings, but in his *Education of Cyrus*. So in other words, Xenophon was familiar with this point of view, but he did not ascribe it to Socrates. Why, one would have to know—I couldn't answer in a short—. Now.

Mr. Londow: Xenophon seems to think, or leads you to think, that if Socrates had not talked big, it's not so clear that he would have been condemned. In other words—

LS: Yes. Now, that is perfectly compatible with Plato's account, at least to that extent that the majority was very small according to Plato, and it is very possible that thirty of the judges would have voted differently if Socrates had behaved in the ordinary manner, I mean, bringing up his kids and appealing to the compassion of the judges, and at least avoiding anything which would hurt their feelings, you know, for example, his proposal that he should be given board in the Prytaneum, and other things. Now this was only one of your questions.

Mr. Londow: Yes, I have another sort of strange question. When Socrates implies that his audience doesn't believe the story of the Delphic oracle, are we to understand that this is characteristic of this new sophisticated Athens, that they don't believe this kind of story, or that it's true of all, as soon as the old—

LS: Oh no, I think—but let us be careful and let us also not trust implicitly Burnet's view of the anti-Delphic posture of the Athenians because Delphi had sided with the Persians in the Persian wars and so on. But let us stick to what we see here immediately. They did not believe that that which was behind Socrates's whole way of life was the Delphic oracle. That's the point. And the fact that—well, of course Chaerephon was dead, the one who had asked for the oracle. His brother could vouch for it, but whether his brother would have been a reliable witness in the eyes of the Athenians, whether he would not [have] been too much attached to Socrates, for example, that's impossible to say. Let us not draw any further conclusion. No, I think the Athenians would

not have condemned Socrates if they had not believed, or the majority of them had not believed, that it is important for the city that the gods of the city be recognized, i.e., that their existence be recognized—and of course they also be properly worshiped in cult—and that they were sure that Socrates did not do that. Athens was not a liberal society, and the view that she was is based chiefly I think on the funeral speech of Pericles in Thucydides, which is a particularly flattering statement about Athens,[xiii] and you only have to read in the same Thucydides how the Athenians behaved in 415—you know, when the hermae were mutilated, and this persecution of guilty and innocent alike without any legal safeguards whatever being observed.[xiv] One would have to know that in order to see that Athens was not in fact liberal.

Now as far as the principle is concerned and not merely factual liberality, the view that recognition of the gods of the city is the duty of every citizen and the neglect of that duty is a punishable offense, and a criminal offense was—I mean, a liberal society in our modern sense according to which opinions and even speeches are perfectly uncontrollable by law, that didn't exist. That came out in a very complex way: the external mechanism was the religious persecutions and wars of the sixteenth, seventeenth[24] [centuries]. But people tried to find a kind of security against religious persecution, then, therefore toleration became established; and then in a later movement, toleration was extended not only to religious convictions and speeches stemming from honest religious convictions but to any convictions and to *any* speeches, so much so that we know that there are contemporaries who say that even grossly obscene speech is protected by the First Amendment. You may have heard of that story. It was not at the University of Chicago, but another university. [Laughter] So a right to freedom of speech, and especially an unqualified right, that didn't exist, and therefore Socrates did not fight for it. The modern interpreters who admire Socrates, or rather let me say the modern journalists who admire Socrates because he is such a defender of freedom of speech, they have no basis in Socrates.[25] You can say Socrates's recurrence to the oracle of Delphi proves that it was necessary for him, in a way, to have a kind of divine sanction, special divine sanction for his activity, you know, so little was there a universal recognition of the right of speech as such. As Socrates says somewhere, there is no freedom of speech in Athens except in the Assembly of the people for the orators (because theirs was a special situation) and on the comic stage, because there was great frivolity and freedom was granted there on that special occasion. But even the comic poets got into troubles if, for example, Aristophanes, when he attacked Cleon in his comedies, he got into trouble for that. But this was a kind of carnival's freedom, you can say, which didn't have in itself any political importance, or at least was [not] meant to. Question number 3?

Mr. Londow: Yes, it appears in the list, in the final list, that I guess if you include the reference to Agamemnon, that Hesiod rather than Homer is . . . .

LS: Yes, yes. Well, this would mean, again, that in this context Hesiod would be the most important. In order to answer that question, there is a very simple way: Study Hesiod. [Laughter]

[xiii] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* II: 37.
[xiv] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* VI: 60-61.

Mr. Fielding: You described philosophy as being concerned with discovering truth and with thought, thinking, and yet in the *Apology*, Socrates seems to emphasize the examination of men for the purpose of showing them that they are not wise [Yes—LS] and to encourage them to care for virtue. And I was wondering whether you see a harmony of those views in the *Apology*.

LS: Well, in the *Apology* that is hard, perhaps, and you know, because it is a public speech. But these assertions themselves are compatible. Now let us start from the most, apparently the most simple: that Socrates was trying every day, as he put, like a gadfly, to admonish every Athenian to be concerned with his virtue. Ya? Sure, but then what is virtue? Now,[26] we know many people who admonish others to be virtuous without necessarily raising the question What is virtue? But I believe Socrates would not fail to raise this question, because he is famous for being the one who has discovered, as it were, the "what is?" questions, so he questions aiming at definitions, and especially with a view to virtue. So Socrates then would raise the question: What is virtue? or has raised it before he admonishes people to be virtuous, and must have answered it to some extent because otherwise how could he admonish people to be virtuous if he did not know what virtue is, to some extent? But let us assume that his knowledge of what virtue is is not complete. In that case he would be also ignorant of virtue as well as he is aware of virtue, would he not? And he would know that he is ignorant and that would mean, with a slight exaggeration, that he knows that he knows nothing. And that this knowledge of his ignorance is what distinguishes him from all his fellows in Athens and elsewhere.

Now if we start from the last point, knowledge of ignorance is impossible without knowledge of what you are ignorant of, because if someone is ignorant of the amount of money someone has in the bank, no one would call him an ignorant man. One would say only [that] he is minding his own business and he is not improperly concerned with other people's private matters. Knowledge of ignorance means knowledge of ignorance regarding the most important things, so one would have to know at least what are the most important things. And one would also have to know what knowledge is. So knowledge of ignorance includes quite a bit. And since it necessarily—knowledge of ignorance is concerned with overcoming that ignorance as far as one is able, it means to philosophize. That's the same. To that extent, the *Apology* is, I think, quite clear regarding Socrates, that he presents philosophy (especially in the first part) as very low, only the slight difference that the philosopher is not a man who boasts, whereas the others are boasters, and not to be a boaster is not something very great. It is better than to be a boaster, by all means, but if someone doesn't boast and has nothing to boast of, that's also nothing very great. But he transcends that, as we have seen, and later on he becomes even very demanding and very high-minded, high-souled.

Mr. Fielding: But does this have to do with the virtue of citizens?

LS: This question is here not opened. It would be wholly improper to open it. That comes up only in the proper context. One can say even in a dialogue which is much more detailed than the *Apology* is, the *Gorgias*, it is still somehow taken for granted that every man ought to be a philosopher. And this leads to the consequence that the *Gorgias* is particularly "quote pessimistic unquote." Present-day commentators trace it to certain incidents in Plato's life or in Athens, because they said, you know, he was like a leaf in the wind: in one year he was sanguine and in

the next year he was downhearted. But in the *Republic* you find then a perfectly clear statement that philosophy is only for some men, not for all—and then this raises a great question of its own, but[27] at least [it] doesn't lead to this downheartedness to which the *Gorgias* leads.

Mr. Fielding: But it's not altogether clear that the *Apology* gives an argument to the city which persuades it.

LS: No, how could it? How could it? No, in a way, Socrates of course seems to say (I mean, in this posture which I have frequently imitated): Why did you not philosophize today? You, you, everybody. And in a way it says that, but then Socrates fortunately comes to our help by replacing philosophy by being concerned with virtue, which has a great advantage of being much vaguer and can only mean: Did you do a good deed today, or did you at least fail to commit a bad deed? Which is also sometimes of some value.

Mr. Fielding: But how will this convince the city that it's made a mistake in putting Socrates to death? I mean, the purpose of the speech is salutary in some respect.

LS: The speech tries to convince the Athenians that Socrates, so far from corrupting the young, rather improves—surely does not corrupt; that's the main point. The purpose is not to make clear what philosophy is, obviously not, because that is not a term occurring in the law. And this after all[28] was a criminal trial. Good. You want to say something?

Mr. Reinken: Just that perhaps the proof of Plato equals Odysseus is that Odysseus is the one who raises Achilles from the dead; Socrates identified with Achilles and reports that he says remarkably different things.

LS: No, but I believe I did not mean more than that. [Laughter] Odysseus is known as *polytropos*, a man of very great versatility, and this is a quality of Socrates and Plato too. In the *Minor Hippias*, the question is discussed: Who is the better man, Achilles or Odysseus? And that great fool Hippias, who is the interlocutor of Socrates, says: Of course Achilles, because Achilles was always honest and Odysseus is such a famous liar. And then Socrates shows to him that while Achilles did have this lovable simplicity, he said of course many times the untruth, because he didn't know. And in Greek that's the same word, to lie and to say the untruth: *pseudēs*. And whereas Odysseus was able to say the untruth deliberately because of his greater knowledge, and therefore Odysseus was a wiser man, therefore a better man than Achilles. Now this is of course somewhat jocular, but[29] no joke to speak of, at least, without its seriousness. And this versatility of Socrates is of course also the versatility of Plato, who could not present it if he didn't have it. Good. Yes?

Student: [In] 41 b, when Socrates talks to his acquitters about him going to dwell in Hades, he mentions that when he goes there, he'll be able to see who is wise and who is not wise. Why doesn't he mention that he may encourage them to be virtuous? Why is only one mentioned and not the other?

LS: In 41b, you say. You say 41b?

Student: I think it's 41b, when he says "the most important thing would be to pass my time in examining[30] and investigating the people as to who is wise and who is not wise."

LS: Well, that is simple. You should all know the answer. Is virtue not the same as wisdom?[31] Well, this is of course one of these very slick and flip answers which anyone with the slightest familiarity with Plato can give, and it's not good enough because Plato argues on *n* different levels. And on a certain primary level, of course, wisdom and virtue are some very different things. I mean, we ordinarily call a man a good man if he is temperate and just, there is Platonic evidence for that; temperate and just without being wise. And Plato uses sometimes the word good in this narrow sense. But he would indeed say a man who is only temperate and just without being sensible—which is a more common word: *phronimos*, not *sophos*, as here—that is a very defective goodness because he would not be able to give an account of what he is doing. He would only do it because of he was told by his parents, by his society to be so and this is not sufficient. Good.

Now let us turn to the *Crito*. Now the *Crito* is the natural sequel to the *Apology*, and therefore the fact that[32] the *Crito* appears in the manuscripts immediately after the *Apology* is perfectly in order. The *Apology*, as we know, is a public conversation with the people of Athens. The *Crito*, however, is a conversation in the greatest privacy between Socrates and his oldest friend. And in addition, not only is it in great privacy: they are alone, but they are also closed off from the world because Socrates is in prison. And in addition, it is still dark when it begins. So we are externally at the opposite pole of the *Apology*. The theme is: Should Socrates escape from prison, and that means of course from Athens, in order to save his life? More generally stated: Should he disobey the law? And Socrates's answer is: One must obey the law without ifs and buts.

Now we have to know a bit about Crito before—at least it is practical to do that before we turn to the dialogue. He was mentioned twice in the *Apology*, as you have seen. He was one of the men who would vouch for Socrates not corrupting the young with a view to Crito's son Critobulus, and he was one of the four men who were vouching for the fine which Socrates was willing to pay. He also occurs quite a bit in the *Phaedo*. He was present at Socrates's death, the day of his death, and he was the one who was commissioned by Socrates to sacrifice the cock to Asclepius. Socrates owed a debt to the god and he entrusted Crito, who also was financially in a good position to do so, to bring that sacrifice. He is also an important character in the dialogue *Euthydemos*, which is at first glance the most comical of the Platonic dialogues.[33] I mention only one point: it is the only Platonic dialogue which begins with the words *tis en*, "who was it," in contradistinction to the famous Socratic question, What is? which is a philosophic question. Who was it? is a question of curiosity. And this question is raised not by Socrates but by Crito.

I prefer[34], because it is simpler, to read to you two passages from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. After having shown that Socrates had nothing to do with these super-scoundrels Critias and Alcibiades, he says: "but Crito was" (let us say) "a friend of Socrates, and Chaerephon," the man who went to Delphi, and "Chaerecrates," the brother of Chaerephon, and "Hermogenes," and "Simmias," and "Cebes," and "Phaedondas, and others[35] who came together with Socrates not in order to become public or forensic speakers, but in order, after having become perfect

gentlemen, they would be able to use nobly their households and members of their households and relatives, and friends, and the city and citizens well. And of these men," these seven men mentioned by name, "no one, either when young or when old, has ever done anything bad nor has he been accused of it."[xv] These seven people, in the middle of which we find Hermogenes, who plays quite a role in Xenophon, but I cannot go into that. So in other words, as Burnet puts it, these are the true Socratics, which is a very funny statement when you think that Plato is absent, Plato whose rank is very clearly stated by Xenophon himself later on in the *Memorabilia*. But the main passage is later in the Second Book, in chapter 9. I must say a word about the context. Chapters 7 to [10 of] Book 2[36] deal with Socrates's posture toward his friends, how he helps them (and these are very funny stories, read with complete lack of humor by the[37] general run of interpreters of Xenophon), and one of them is Crito. It is interesting that in a few cases the people are not called friends, in Greek *philoi*, but other words: *hetairoi*, which means something like comrades, or even simply *gnorimoi*, acquaintances. Nothing of this kind is done in the Crito chapter, for a very good reason as you will see. "I know that he" (Socrates) "once heard Crito say that life at Athens was difficult for a man who wished to mind his own business." You know, i.e., a nice man who[38] [isn't] a busybody.

> "At this moment," Criton added, "actions are pending against me not because I have done the plaintiffs any injury, but because they think that I would sooner pay than have trouble."
> "Tell me, Criton," said Socrates, "Do you keep dogs to fend the wolves from your sheep?"
> "Certainly," replied Criton, "because it pays me better to keep them.'"
> *Socrates*: "'Then why not keep a man who may be able and willing to fend off the attempts to injure you?'"
> *Criton*: "'I would gladly do so were I not afraid that he might turn on *me*.'" [Laughter]
> "What? [Socrates said—LS] don't you see that it is much pleasanter to profit by humoring a man like you than by quarreling with him? I assure you there are many in this city who would take pride in your friendship."
> Thereupon they seek out [Criton and Socrates seek out—LS] Archedemus, an excellent speaker and man of affairs, but poor. For he was not one of those who make money unscrupulously, but an honest man, and he would say that it was easy to take forfeit from false accusers. So whenever Criton was storing corn, oil, wine, wool or other farm produce [Criton obviously being a farmer, a gentleman farmer—LS] he would make a present of a portion to Archedemus, and when he sacrificed, he invited him, and in fact lost no similar opportunity of showing courtesy. Archedemus came to regard Criton's house as a haven of refuge and constantly paid his respects to him. He soon found out that Criton's false accusers [the sycophants—LS] had much to answer for and many enemies.

LS: You know the sycophant is the Athenian equivalent to what we call a public prosecutor. There was no public prosecutor, but everyone who wished—*ho boulomenos*—everyone who wished and knew of any bad action could denounce him to

[xv] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* II.9.

the authorities and this led to the fact that some people lived from that because it was obviously a good source of income, as I don't have to [be]labor when speaking in the city of Chicago.

> He [this Archedemus—LS] brought one of them to trial on a charge involving damages or imprisonment. The defendant [this sycophant—LS] conscious that he was guilty on many counts, did all he could to get quit of Archedemus. But Archedemus refused to let him off [like a true dog—LS] until he withdrew the action against Criton and compensated him. Archedemus carried through several other enterprises of a similar kind; and now many of Criton's friends begged him to make Archedemus their protector, just as when a shepherd has a good dog [laughter] the other shepherds want to pen their flocks near his, in order to get benefit from his dog. Archedemus was glad to humor Criton, and so there was peace not only for Criton but for his friends as well. [In other words, he was a sycophant of sycophants, and therefore very useful against sycophants—LS] If anyone whom he had offended reproached Archedemus with flattering Criton because he found Criton useful, Archedemus would answer: "Which, then, is disgraceful: to have honest men [gentlemen—LS] for your friends, by accepting and returning their favours, and to fall out with crooks; or to treat gentlemen as enemies by trying to injure them, and to make friends of crooks by siding with them, and to prefer their intimacy?"
>
> Henceforward Archedemus was respected [or honored—LS] by Criton's friends and was himself honored among them.[xvi]

So Archedemus was a friend of Crito.[39] If this is the meaning of friend, could Socrates have been a friend of Crito? Socrates liked him; they knew each other very well, but in any serious sense of the word he was not his friend. I think that is a nice story. And well, there are other such stories. You might read these whole four chapters in Xenophon, [*Memorabilia*] Book 2, chapters 7 to 10. Now let us begin at the beginning of the *Crito*.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Socrates*: Why have you come at this time, Crito? Or isn't it still early?
> *Crito*: Yes, very early.
> *Soc*: About what time?
> *Crito*: Just before dawn. (43a1-3)

LS: Now, you see here,[40] this dialogue begins with a Socratic question, and the first question which is answered at least is: Is it not very early? The beginning has a certain resemblance to a scene near the beginning of Plato's *Protagoras*, you know?

Student: Hippocrates comes to see Protagoras and it's very early in the morning, it's before dawn, and he's just heard that Protagoras is at the house of—I forget his name. [Callias—LS]

[xvi] Strauss reads from Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, trans. E. C. Marchant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), II.9. In original: "rogues," not "crooks."

Callias. And he comes and he wakes Socrates up, and he wants to rush over there because he knows that the—

LS: In order to see Protagoras, but[41] the common thing is that he arrives in the early morning. But in contradistinction to Crito, he awakens Socrates and the purport is to see Protagoras. Here the situation is otherwise very different. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "I am surprised that the watchman of the prison was willing to let you in.
> *Crito*: He is used to me by this time, Socrates, because I have[xvii] come here so often, and besides I have done something for him. [Laughter] (43a4-43a8)

LS: So you see—I'm sure that this was not an illegal action, but on the other hand I believe it was not an action that [was] commanded by law. [Laughter] And this was the second question. Now we come to the third question.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Have you just come, or some time ago?
> *Crito*: Some little time ago. (43a9-43a10)

LS: That is the third question; let us count. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Then why did you not wake me at once, instead of sitting by me in silence?
> *Crito*: No, no, by Zeus, Socrates, I only wish I myself were not so sleepless and sorrowful. But I have been wondering at you for some time, seeing how sweetly you sleep; and I purposefully refrained from waking you, that you might pass the time as pleasantly as possible. I have often thought throughout your life hitherto that you were of a happy disposition, and I think so more than ever in this present misfortune, since you bear it so easily and calmly. (43b1-43b11)

LS: "And gently," ya. So this is the fourth question of Socrates: Why did you not wake me up? And Crito answers the question and shows a very touching concern. He is concerned with Socrates's spending his life as pleasantly as possible and with that peculiar pleasure which derives from oblivion of unpleasantness, and in this case of his death. And he admires Socrates's ability to forget, which derives from Socrates's disposition, from his *tropos*. Crito, we see here again, is a benefactor: just as he benefited the guard, the prison guard, he benefits in another way, a more important way, his old friend Socrates. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Well, Crito, it would be absurd if at my age I were disturbed because I must die now.

[xvii] In original: "because I come"

> *Crito*: Other men as old, Socrates, become involved in similar misfortunes, but their age does not in the least prevent them from being disturbed by their fate.
> *Soc*: That is true. (43c1-43c6)

LS: Let us stop here. It is foolish to be angry that one has to die when one is old, Socrates says. This raises a question: Would he have felt differently and would he have acted differently if he had been still young or of middle age? We remember the passage toward the end of the *Apology* when he says it is now good for him to die. And of course, by his remark about Socrates's disposition, Crito draws our attention unconsciously to the great difference between Socrates's disposition and his own, which we must keep in mind if we wish to understand what happens later. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: But why have you come so early?
> *Crito*: To bring news, Socrates, sad news, though apparently not sad to you, but sad and grievous to me and all your friends, and to few of them, I think, so grievous as to me. (43c6-43c10)

LS: Ya. Now here we have the fifth question, if we count: "Why did you come so early?" Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: What is this news? Has the ship come from Delos, at the arrival of which I am to die?
> *Crito*: It has not exactly come, but I think it will come to-day from the reports of some men who have come from Sunium and left it there. Now it is clear from what they say that it will come to-day, [and] so to-morrow, Socrates, your life must end. (43c10-43d6)

LS: Ya. Now here we have the sixth question, which is answered in a manner by Socrates himself. The news? He[42] is almost sure that the answer is that the ship has come from[43] [Delos], at the arrival of which he must die. This is the last of the initial Socratic questions. And here, what Crito says in his answer is a most important piece of information, which Crito possesses and which Socrates lacks because Socrates is cut off from the world. And that knowledge derives from human messengers, I think that's obvious, and they came from Sounion, which is a sea, that the ship has come back from Crete. Now we do not take any undue risk if we say that the Crito opens with "quote Socratic questions unquote" to which Crito, and not Socrates, possesses the answers. Socrates couldn't know whether Crito came now or an hour ago, and so on. And the reason is that Socrates is cut off from the world, asleep in prison. This we must understand in order to understand the sequel.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Well, Crito, good luck be with us! If this is the will of the gods, so be it. However, I do not think it will come to-day.
> *Crito*: What is your— (43d7-44a1).

LS: Ya. Now you see that is one point. Although Socrates is closed off from the world and has no information, he[44] doesn't trust the human messengers. [LS taps on the table] Now, why?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Crito*: What is your reason for not thinking so?
> *Soc*: I will tell you. I must die on the day after the ship comes in, must I not?
> *Crito*: So those say who have charge of these matters.
> *Soc*: Well, I think it will not come in to-day, but to-morrow. And my reason for this is a dream which I had a little while ago in the course of this night. And perhaps you let me sleep just at the right time. (44a1-44a8)

LS: Now let us stop here. So Socrates doesn't believe in what the human messengers say and the inference from it, but he believes in the dream. And in the light of the dream, Crito's concern with Socrates's sleep proves to be a very good action because he would have disturbed that dream.

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "What was the dream?" (44a8)

LS: Ya, you see now it is Crito's turn to ask a question. And with this little thing the leadership in the dialogue passes from Crito to Socrates, as we will see in the sequel. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Crito*: What was the dream?
> *Soc*: I dreamed that a beautiful, fair woman, clothed in white raiment, came to me and called me and said, "Socrates, on the third day thou wouldst come to fertile Phthia." (44a8-44b2)

LS: Ya, let us stop there. Now that was the trick. Now the verse is from the Ninth Book of the *Iliad*, where Achilles speaks to Odysseus, and there is only a minor change because, since Achilles is the speaker, he says: "[45]I would come on the third day to Phthia."[xviii] And since in Socrates's dream it is said by a woman, it must of course be changed into: "thou wilt come"; therwise it is literally correct. Socrates, at any rate, seems to be in the role of Achilles, and this is not surprising, because we have seen his Achillean character in the *Apology*, 28c to d. But this difficulty: Socrates is old and Achilles was young. Achilles had the choice between dying young and gaining imperishable fame on the one hand, and returning to Phthia and a long life on the other. That is later on in the Ninth Book of the *Iliad*. What are the choices before Socrates? Socrates seems to have the choice between dying now and a good reputation on the one hand, and escaping from prison and living a little longer on the other. Now what choice is recommended by the dream? That would be the question. To come home. That[46] can be interpreted to come to the other world, and that is stating the obvious meaning. But there is also a certain ambiguity here, because where is Phthia?[47]

Mr. Reinken: Is it in Thessaly?

[xviii] Homer, *Iliad* IX: 363.

LS: In Thessaly. [Laughter] And Thessaly is the place which Crito has in mind where Socrates should escape. Whether one could come in two days from Athens to Thessaly is another question. There are other difficulties, but it's very funny. But who is that decent woman dressed beautiful[ly] and good to look at, and having [laughter] *eueidēs*, a good form and shape, and having white dresses. Who is she? Now[48] since the story is taken primarily from Achilles, one could think for a moment of Thetis, his mother, who appears to Achilles in the *Iliad*. But[49] Thetis [is] a goddess and he speaks here of a woman. It's hard to say, and any guess is possible, and any guess is possible which is not demonstrably wrong, say, if you would say this woman was the wife of President Johnson, that would be patently false [laughter] because he couldn't have known her. And so I suggest one as a possibility among, I'm sure, millions: it could be one of the Clouds,[50] in the company of which Socrates was presented in Aristophanes's *Clouds*. But let us read only a very few lines now.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Crito*: A strange dream, Socrates.
> *Soc*: No, a clear one, at any rate, I think, Crito.
> *Crito*: Too clear, apparently. But, my dear Socrates— (44b3-44b6)

LS: Ya, now let us stop here one moment, and that's the end of what we will do. The word which he uses, which he translates by "dear" is *ō daimonie* Socrates, which is used colloquially in the sense [of] "strange fellow," but which has here an ambiguity unknown to Crito, namely, "you demonic Socrates." You divine, in a way, the story of Thessaly—that you should arrive in Thessaly in a few minutes. We'll leave it at that and next time we will go on.

[end of session]

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[1] Moved "even;" deleted "And yet—and—."

[2] Deleted "is—."

[3] Deleted "would—."

[4] Deleted "We have no—."

[5] Deleted "Agamemnon's—."

[6] Deleted "Now, if we make here—."

[7] Deleted "you know. One must."

[8] Deleted "I will not—I mean, it will—you may—."

[9] Deleted "We should have—I—."

[10] Deleted "this is—."

[11] Deleted "this is—."

[12] Deleted "is clear—."

[13] Deleted "in Plato—and."

[14] Deleted 'Pardon? Loud."

[15] Deleted “he says—.”

[16] Deleted “ b.”

[17] Deleted “Can we synchronize our watches? That’s about correct? Yeah, we can have a few…a brief discussion.”

[18] Deleted “or—and that—it doesn’t say that—resolution—.”

[19] Deleted “LS: Yeah.”

[20] Deleted “he does—that is in no way—in—in—.”

[21] Deleted “finds”

[22] Deleted “but”

[23] Deleted “makes a—.”

[24] Deleted “century.”

[25] Deleted “And that is the reason—the—.”

[26] Deleted “this question is—we—.”

[27] Deleted “it is.”

[28] Deleted “it was—it was a forensic—it was.”

[29] Deleted “no joke without its—.”

[30] Deleted “LS: Yes.”

[31] Deleted “Yeah.”

[32] Deleted “they appear in the manuscripts, the—.”

[33] Deleted “And it begins—.”

[34] Deleted “to.”

[35] Deleted “who were together—.”

[36] Deleted “7 to 10.”

[37] Deleted “general interpreters.”

[38] Deleted “doesn’t wish—not.”

[39] Deleted “Was—.”

[40] Deleted “Socrates—.”

[41] Deleted “he also—he arrives—.”

[42] Deleted “he knows—he.”

[43] Deleted “Delia.”

[44] Deleted “is—.”

[45] Deleted “‘I will come—.’”

[46] Deleted “that can mean to come to the—can—.”

[47] Deleted “Pardon?”

[48] Deleted “in the story of—.”

[49] Deleted “the woman—and he—.”

[50] Deleted “which—.”

Session 11: November 22, 1966

Leo Strauss: There was a nameless student [who] wrote to me: "Please clarify the relationship between the philosopher and the city as it is presented in the *Apology*. I would appreciate a more thematic treatment of this question in class." Despite the namelessness of the writer, I am willing to do my best. I think I have complied with this request to the extent to which it was feasible on the basis of the text we have read, hitherto discussed. But a few points will bear repeating. Now what we find in the *Republic*, explicitly in such a way that the meanest capacity will become aware of it at the first reading, is this: that the polis has the power, as distinguished from the right, to forbid philosophizing. And as Socrates says, as you know, in this case [that] if the city should forbid it, I would not obey her. The serious question and the more philosophic question is this: Is this possibility that the city has the power to forbid philosophizing essential to the city, or only an accident due to a misconstruction of the city? I would say yes, and this is the reason why this student wrote this paper, I believe. And I would state it in the form of a syllogism as follows: philosophy is the attempt to replace opinions about everything, about the greatest things, by knowledge of them. But the city rests, stands, and falls by opinions about the greatest things. Therefore philosophy, by trying to replace the opinions by knowledge, questions the foundations of society; and to that extent it is a danger to society—or to use a blunt word, is subversive.

Now let us take an example from our country or age: the beginning of the Declaration of Independence, where certain things are presented there as evident truths. The majority of people today, at least of academic people today, say these are not evident truths. And that would mean in older language [that] they are opinions. Now if the academic teacher does his duty and makes clear that these are opinions and not knowledge, he to that extent weakens the power of these opinions, subverts them. Now, fortunately people are not always so curious or so serious as [they should be about these matters, though] and therefore nothing happens, that is to say nothing[1] of the concept of academic freedom or other freedoms into which I do not have to go here, although it is very relevant. The ordinary, the prevailing view today, as you all know, is this: such things as stated at the beginning of the Declaration of Independence or in any other place of this kind are value judgments. And being value judgments they cannot possibly be true or untrue, correct or wrong. And therefore,[2] if you don't like them particularly, you can replace them in your own mind by other, opposite opinions, and you cannot act on that because there is a law which you have to obey. But that by questioning the ultimate rationality of the laws you are in an awkward position morally, that apparently doesn't create any heartrending difficulties for most of our contemporaries. By stressing the value character of these things, one in a way subverts them as lies in one's power. And this creates a problem. So in other words, the problem—to come to a conclusion of this point—the problem with which Socrates was concerned, or Plato, is still with us, mitigated or obfuscated by the fact that we live in a liberal society, that is to say, in a society which guarantees as a matter of principle freedom of inquiry whereas there was no such guaranty in former times. And this is of course a great benefit for every inquirer, but we must also consider, [we] must be precise, if we want to be true social scientists, i.e., to see not only what is attractive in our values but also what is repulsive in them, therefore we must not concede the other side. And this is my practical criticism of the now reigning school. It stems from Max Weber, this value-free social science, as you know. But what Max Weber had in mind was this:

that the academic teacher should make clear to himself what can be said against his preferences and take it seriously, whereas the mass of the present-day social scientists are concerned [about] only what speaks against value judgments which they abhor anyway, which[3] does not require any intelligence and any self-control at all, as you know. Now, you just go into the classroom or into, say, a study without undergoing any change, any conversion, to ordinary beliefs in—you know, political beliefs, from[4] adherence to ordinary beliefs, to a critical posture towards your own beliefs. This, as I say, is very easy and can be done by everyone without any effort whatsoever. Yes.

Student: You said that the power to forbid philosophizing is essential to the city.

LS: Oh, I didn't say that; I started from—I was much more careful. I said the city can do it. Now if you say[5] [that] the conclusion from actuality to potentiality or possibility is a good conclusion, which I believe it is,[6] then you can say from this point of view [that] it is an essential possibility of the city.

Student: But you were just talking about the power, though. What about the—does that make it just? That is—

LS: [7]When I make this statement—

Student: I'm not certain—I'm sure that it doesn't necessarily—

LS: Well, I said there's a power as distinguished from the right.

Student: Does that mean it's not just?

LS: That requires an inquiry.[8] In liberal societies we take for granted that there should be no opinions which are as such forbidden. Whether this is feasible under all circumstances is a very long question. It depends also on the degree of stability of the country concerned. In other words, opinions which may be bearable, as bearable for society as fleas are for dogs in peaceful societies, may be as unbearable as savage animals in less peaceful situations. You know? For example, let us take—well, you know the practice of the communists; I don't have to labor that point. They regard definitely certain opinions as forbidden opinions, and if someone would write a criticism of Marxism in Soviet Russia or any other of these countries, he would soon cease to be a professor. And how they would justify it?[9] Perhaps they would say no student comes anymore to his classes because the students will be prevented by Komsomol[i] members from attending his class. Well, similar things applied in the Nazi regime, as you know, where if someone would have written a book attacking their racial science[10], he wouldn't have found a publisher. And if he would have said it in classes there would have been some representative or more than one of the Nazi party who would have stopped him. Now these things of course do not happen in liberal countries, you know that. But in another way, there is of course a kind of nonlegal and very mild censorship. You may have read the expression "the establishment" in the

[i] A political youth organization in the former Soviet Union.

newspaper, "the establishment" being that man or body of men who protects the favored opinions of that society and punishes in a nonlegal, I don't say illegal, manner by all kinds of devices those who don't happen to agree with the establishment. I mean,[11] without any question there are various ways in which it can be done, you know? For example, you can say if a man writes an essay based on the ruling prejudices, and a very poor essay, and another man writes an equally poor essay based on prejudices other than the ruling ones, the first has a much greater chance to be published than the other. I have heard that [at] a certain university, where a student wrote a doctoral thesis on the subject [of] freedom and virtue, that he was severely examined regarding virtue but no one[12] quarreled with him on his speaking of freedom. And obviously the goose and gander would easily apply. I mean, if virtue is a word which cannot be used without great caution and long examination, the same would be true of freedom, I would say. This exists in all societies, and it would be very inhuman and uncharitable to complain about that. That is so. But it shows—indeed, that was the point which I'm trying to make—that the problem of Socrates is not completely disposed of merely by the emergence of liberal societies. It lives on. Yes?

Student: But still, I'm aware that you can't answer the question: Is it just? simply by telling me. But I would like you to help me, if you could, [to] suggest some of the relevant questions and the relevant things to consider in order to further an inquiry into[13] whether or not what the cities do, and what they still seem to do, is just.

LS: Of course one must do that.

Same student: Yeah, but how? Would you suggest questions—

LS: Well, there are all kinds of questions. In one way, the wisest thing is to begin with specific questions, such as: Should there [be] civil boards watching the activity of the police? That's a concrete question. That has something to do with that question. And also the question: What about obscenity? You know, the famous Berkeley issue.[ii] Does the freedom of speech include the freedom of obscene speech? Of which no one ever thought in former times, but now with the gradual enlargement of the liberal principles there is no reason [not to]. I suggested many years ago that the men who are supposed to make the final decision on matters of this kind, namely, the Supreme Court, should have a seminar among themselves, studying the Shakespearean plays, and see to what extent obscenity occurring there differs from obscenity used in *Playboy*—[14] is it a magazine? I have never read it. [Laughter] Oh, I see. I'm sorry. All right, you know what I mean. [Great laughter] All right, that is enough.

Mr. Reinken: Eros is the magazine.

LS: Oh, is it? [Laughter] So, I'm really—

Mr. Reinken: As I read in the papers. [Laughter]

[ii] The Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley (1964-1965).

LS: I see. Well, I'm more innocent than you. Good. In other words—see, for example, also from the quantitative point of view that would play a certain role, would it not? Say, if in [a] thousand words there is only one obscene word, does [it] make a difference then if every tenth word is obscene? But there are more subtle things than that.

Student: Another question, I suppose is: you pointed out that Socrates was convicted by Athens under a law[15] about impiety. Now the question of the justice of that law, I suppose, has to be raised.

LS: Sure.

Same student: And I was wondering, you know, how in the *Apology*—

LS: In the *Apology* he takes this law for granted, of course. I mean, that is not the best place to question a law, when you are accused of the transgression of it. But Plato takes it up, as I said, in the *Laws*, where he raises the question: What are those opinions which ought to be accepted by every citizen in a well-ordered society? And there he brings in the gods who, in his opinion, are demonstrably beings, what I call the cosmic god, and that must be accepted, but making it quite clear what is usually[16] not considered, that if these people who transgress this fundamental law regarding the gods are otherwise honest men they will not be capitally punished; they will only be put into jail and there have the company of wiser men who will try to show them that they were wrong, which is a rather humane form of punishment. And of course, the question of the First Amendment regarding freedom of religion: Does it mean freedom from religion? And so on and so on. Mr. —

Mr. Londow: I can[17] answer a question about the gods of the city. When there is a change of regime, when an oligarchy becomes a democracy for example, the gods don't change.[18] I mean, for instance[19], while there are Athenian gods there are no democratic gods or oligarchic gods.

LS: Ya, but there are certain differences there, but in general you are right. For example, the Hermae, the mutilation of the Hermae in 415, you know, at the beginning of the Sicilian expedition.[iii] The Hermae were especially connected (Hermes was very ignorant) to the Athenian democracy. There were preferences for this or that god or for this or that cult which had a political— but generally speaking you are right.

Mr. Londow: Well, I guess that in a way does answer it.[20] I mean, just the thought occurred to me that in a certain respect[21] belief in some god was required,[22] [but] the gods themselves had no preference.

LS: Yes, this is true, this is in a general way true; and that is of course very striking, especially in Aristotle's *Politics*, when he speaks of the things which every city as [a] city requires. And then he begins—I forgot now. He starts from bottom. Well, you have to have a Greek culture, and you have to have arts, and so on, up to the government. And then he says in this list of *n* points, I

[iii] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* VI.27.

believe nine, "fifth and first" what we would call religion, what he calls concern with the divine things. Fifth and first, of course, according to its intrinsic rank, but fifth from the point of view of the polis, of the needs of the polis. This is a great question.[23] Generally speaking, what you say about the neutrality of regimes in regard to the gods of the city is correct, but there is one kind of regime which is essentially connected with the gods and that is what, to use a term not occurring[24] in Plato or Aristotle but coined much later: theocracy. The term was coined, as far as I know, by Philo the Jew in trying to spell out the character of the Jewish biblical regime. But there is, however, a Greek equivalent, and that is the rule of priests. The rule of priests has obviously a closer relation to "quote religion unquote" (I put it in quotes because there is no Greek word for religion) than the difference between oligarchy, democracy, and monarchy. But here the position of the classical philosophers is, I think, quite clear. They were against rule of priests. The simple proof would be, the most obvious proof would be what Plato says at the beginning of the *Timaeus* when he describes, or his character describes the Egyptian regime, which is described as a rule of priests and in obvious confrontation with the rule of philosophers in the *Republic*. Good. Now, Mr. Bruell?

Mr. Bruell: At the beginning of this course you said that we shouldn't lightly speak of Socrates's death as tragic. And then you spoke of, you mentioned that Hegel did consider[25] his death to be tragic, and the reason or at least part of the reason was that two equally high things or two varied the city. Well, from the statement which you made at the beginning of this class I don't understand the difference between the presentation of Plato in the *Apology* and Hegel's presentation.

LS: Ya, that is a good question, but I believe the answer is very simple. The conflict can lead to tragedy; that I will gladly grant. But did it lead to a tragedy in the case of Socrates?

Mr. Bruell: No, but does that settle the question as to whether it's essentially tragic? I thought that was the—

LS: Yes,[26] I grant you that, but the question concerns the fate of Socrates. And here we have to consider the fact, which comes out very clearly at the very end of the *Apology*, that Socrates died when he was 70, i.e., at the time when death was for him less, much less of an evil than when he would have been younger. To that extent I still maintain it. And Socrates's emphasis throughout the latter part of the *Apology* is not an evil. I mean, a tragedy presupposes that some evil happens to someone. But Socrates denies that.

Mr. Bruell: But[27] what would you say in reference—

LS: The destruction of philosophy would be an evil. The destruction of the polis as polis would be an evil, obviously. But neither philosophy nor the polis was destroyed in that time.[28] I mean, it was not an easy situation. There is an allusion. The clearest statement is a remark made by Isocrates, the orator, the teacher of rhetoric, at the beginning of his writing called *Busiris*,[iv] a tyrannical Egyptian king, who he praises there. It's a very funny piece. And there he speaks of

[iv] Strauss spells the name of the writing.

the fact that philosophy was laid low in 399. And I forget now the exact wording, but it was apparently a dangerous situation; and Plato's absence from Socrates's deathbed, so to speak, may very well have to be be connected with the fact that he had left Athens at that time. He left it, surely, shortly afterwards. Now Xenophon had been exiled a few years before, but this may have had purely political reasons, Xenophon being a knight, belonging to this knightly class, aristocratic class, and so on. Yes.

Now I must draw a line somewhere[29] because we should really read something in the *Crito*. Now we began last time the dialogue *Crito* and we have seen that this dialogue is in an unusual way a *privatissime*, a most private conversation between Socrates and his old friend Crito. And it begins with Socratic questions of a sort, and these questions are questions to which Crito possesses a complete answer. And the ordinary Socratic questions are, as you know, questions to which the questioned man does not have an answer. But when hearing Crito's answer to his last question, Socrates doubts Crito's answer. Crito's answer was an inference from a message brought by human messengers. And Socrates doubts that answer on the basis of a dream which he had had—we can say on the basis of a knowledge[30] of more than human origin. Crito thinks that Socrates will have to die tomorrow, the day after they meet, but Socrates is sure that he will have to die only the day after tomorrow. And Socrates believes that on the basis of the dream. The dream makes use of a word from the *Iliad*, in which Achilles is the speaker addressing Odysseus. In Socrates's dream, a fair woman is the speaker addressing Socrates. So you see there is another parallelism between Socrates and Odysseus, a point which I have made more than once. The dream is, as a dream should be, ambiguous. It may mean that on the day after tomorrow Socrates will be dead, i.e., in Hades, after having won great fame through his lawabidingness, or that he will be in Thessaly or on his way to Thessaly, having escaped death by flight and at the same time jeopardized his fame as a lawabiding man. That is the choice before Achilles, rephrased in terms of the choice before Socrates. So this was the point to which we came, and then we go on. Does it have to do with what I said now?

Student: What you just said now.

LS: Ya.

Same student: [31]Why is it necessarily true that one acquires fame by abiding by the law?[32]

LS: I mean, are you not concerned with your good reputation? And do you not endanger it by having some prior convictions? Yes?

Student: Well, that came to mind—you mentioned this on the first day of class. If you were in Nazi Germany—

LS: I see. Yes, yes. That is indeed true. In other words, laws may be so bad and unjust that it is an honor to transgress them. That's quite true. Keep this question in mind, because that is the chief subject of the *Crito*. Good. Now let us continue, 44b3. We read that already—the beginning we read already last time. "The dream seems to be clear to me, Crito," Socrates says. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: No, a clear one, at any rate, I think, Crito.
> *Crito*: Too clear, apparently. But, my dear [and that's *daimonie*—Mr. R.][v] Socrates, even now listen to me and save yourself. Since, if you die, it will be no mere single misfortune to me, but I shall lose a friend such as I can never find again, and besides, many persons who do not know you and me well will think I could have saved you if I had been willing to spend money— (44b4-44c1)

LS: Ya, but this—"besides," this is important. This is a new argument. "And furthermore[33] I will seem to many."

Mr. Reinken: "but that I would not take the trouble. And yet what reputation could be more disgraceful—" (44c1-44c3)

LS: No, "that I could have saved you if I had wished to spend money."

Mr. Reinken: "if I had been willing to spend money,[vi] but that I would not take the trouble. And yet what reputation could be more disgraceful than that of considering one's money of more importance than one's friends?" (44c1-44c 4).

LS: Ya, or rather "seeming to"; then "what reputation would be more disgraceful than seeming to regard money as higher than friends?" Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "For most people will not believe that we were eager to help you to go away from here, but you refused." (44c5-44c6)

LS: Ya. Now let us stop here. Now the word for friends which occurs first when he says "I will be deprived of such friend" is in Greek the word *epitēdeios*, not the ordinary or common word *philos*. This has in a way a lower meaning. I have a note here somewhere. This word *epitēdeios* occurs here with unusual frequency. I have at least five references. *Epitēdeios* means made for a purpose, suitable, convenient, useful, serviceable, necessary, friendly. In other words, the utilitarian aspect of friendship is more visible here than [in] the other one, the more noble one. Now Crito beseeches Socrates to escape for Crito's sake. The main point is [that] Crito's reputation is harmed if Socrates does not escape. And that is the beginning: so "do it for my sake."[34] This has to do—you know what I said about the meaning of the word for friend used here, the utilitarian consideration, is of course quite powerful in this very nice old man, Crito. He is a very nice man, but you know niceness has many strata, and if you look through the niceness of a man with a kind of x-rays, it is not quite so nice as if you look at it with unarmed eyes. You must know that. That happens quite frequently, and we could not live if we always used x-rays towards ourselves and others. Good. Yes?

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[v] Phrase in brackets inserted by Mr. Reinken.
[vi] Mr. Reinken inserts Strauss's translation.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "But, my dear Crito, why do we care so much for what most people think? For the most reasonable men—" (44c6-44c8)

LS: Well, literally, "why do we care so much about the opinion of the many."

Mr. Reinken: "about the opinion of the many,[vii] for the most reasonable men, whose opinion is worth more[viii] considering, will think that things were done as they really will be done." (44c6-44c10).

LS: Ya. Now, "most reasonable" is also not well translated. The "most respectable" would be a better translation. You see, Socrates disregards completely Crito's grief over the loss of his best friend. He speaks only of what he apparently considers Crito's chief worry, the fear of what the many might think. Yet Socrates does not suggest here, as you see, complete disregard of the opinion of the many. He says: So why are we concerned so, to that degree, with the opinion of the many? If Socrates had completely disregarded the opinion of the many he would never have told the story of the Delphic oracle, for example, as a substitute for the other thing. Yes. Good.

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "But you see it is necessary, Socrates, to care for the opinion of the many,[ix] for this very trouble we are in now shows that the many are[x] able to accomplish not by any means the least, but almost the greatest of evils, if one has a bad reputation with them.[xi]" (44d1-44d6)

LS: "If one is slandered among them." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "I only wish, Crito, the people could accomplish—" (44d6-44d7)

LS: Ya.

Mr. Reinken:

> the many[xii] could accomplish the greatest evils, that they might be able to accomplish also the greatest good things. Then all would be well. But now they can do neither of the two; for they are not able to make a man wise or foolish, but they do whatever occurs to them.
> *Crito*: That may well be. (44c6-44e1)

LS: Ya, now let us stop here. The many cannot do one the greatest harm. Yet that is implied, [that] they can do one great harm. Crito does not make this point, and that means that Socrates somehow succeeds in silencing Crito's fear regarding Crito's reputation. A reputation, opinion,

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[vii] In original: "for what most people think"
[viii] In original: "more worth"
[ix] In original: "opinion of the public"
[x] In original: "the public is"
[xi] In original: "bad reputation with it"
[xii] In original: "the people"

is the same word in Greek, *doxa*. Socrates says [that] he who can do the greatest evil can also do the greatest good. Is this simply true? For in certain cases it is quite obvious: the physician is best at curing people, and he is also best, say, at poisoning; an example taken from the *Republic*, the First Book. The gods are responsible for the greatest goods, as is developed in the *Republic* and the *Euthyphron*, but not for any evils. This would be the great difficulty. Yet according to the popular view, the gods are responsible for both the greatest goods and the greatest evils. Crito's fear of the opinion of the many would be justified if the many were gods or like gods. In that case one obviously would[35] be compelled to bow to their opinion, if they could do the greatest good as well as the greatest evils. You see, here the greatest good is here identified again with *phronēsis*, with reasonableness, sensibility. And that presupposes or leads to the equation of virtue, and *phronēsis*, and sensibility, being sensible—a famous Socratic equation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "But, Socrates, tell me this—" (44e1-44e2)

LS: Ya, now this is not well translated. It can mean, "the following one," meaning that[36] [it is a] new point. Ya?

Mr. Reinken: "the following[xiii]: you are not considering me and your other friends, are you—" (44e 2-44e 3)

LS: The word is again *epitēdeion*, as you see. Ya?

Mr. Reinken: "fearing that, if you escape, the informers will make trouble for us by saying that we stole you away, and we shall be forced to lose either all our property or a good deal of money, or be punished in some other way besides? For if you are afraid of anything of that kind, let it go; since it is right for us to run this risk, and even greater risk that this, if necessary, provided we save you. Now please do as I ask." (44e3-45a4)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. So here, now he brings a new argument. Perhaps Crito had said by implication at the beginning of his speech here [that] perhaps one does not have to fear the many. As Socrates has observed,[37] since they cannot[38] give the greatest goods, they cannot inflict the greatest evils. But there are also lesser evils which a sensible man would try to avoid. One surely has to fear the sycophants, the denouncers: they, at any rate, can do harm to one, especially regarding one's property, if one has property; and Crito has very much of it. Whereas Crito had asked Socrates to consider Crito's reputation, he does not ask him to consider Crito's property. To that extent Crito is a noble character. It is Crito's duty to sacrifice for his friend his fortune, but not his reputation. On the contrary. Now this is a very [important] point which deserves considering. If you replace the word reputation for one moment by sacred honor, giving the formula of the Declaration of Independence, you remember—do you know it by heart?

Student: Our lives, our fortune, our sacred honor.

LS: No, no, the verb, the verb which they use.

[xiii] In original: "this"

Student: We pledge. Pledge.

LS: Ya, you see, they pledge to their fortunes, meaning to sacrifice their fortunes. But they pledge their sacred honor to uphold their sacred honor and not to forsake it. So the same difference is meant [as] here. Good. Yes?

Student: [39]Is it possible to construe Crito's emphasis on the need for saving Socrates as a realization on Crito's part of Socrates's value as a philosopher, as an inquirer?

LS: [40]I mean, if I may take a liberty, and making a mere assertion without proof, I would say no. I think Crito was a very nice man, as nice people go. He liked Socrates, an old friend, and he relied on Socrates's advice in practical matters. Xenophon's beautiful chapter, which I read to you, is a good example, you know when Crito was in trouble from the sycophants, and Socrates gave him the advice to have recourse to a counter-sycophant,[41] just as a dog keeps away the wolves. You remember that? And Xenophon may have exaggerated a bit, but Crito was not a man greatly concerned with inquiry, I believe. But he liked Socrates, [42]and I think his whole self-esteem was linked up with Socrates, you know. He had a certain dignity in Athens as a friend of Socrates, and now this imposes a certain duty upon it, and, for example, to put it quite simply: to sacrifice all his fortune, which was considerable, but not to sacrifice his honor. On the contrary. Good. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "I am considering this, Crito, and many other things." (45a4-45a5)

LS: Yes, "I consider both this and many other things," meaning he doesn't enlarge on that, and we have to use our own poor imaginations to say of what other things he could also consider. And I believe one could say that Socrates may also have some concern with Crito's not incurring such great monetary losses. This is, at any rate, the way in which Crito understands Socrates, as we see from the sequel. Ya?

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "Well, do not fear this! for it is not even a large sum of money which we should pay to some men who are willing to save you and get you away from here. Besides, don't you see how cheap these informers are, [and] that not much money would be needed to silence them? And you have my money at your command, which is enough, I fancy—" (45a5-45b1)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. So[43] in other words: If you worry about so many things, and maybe among them my having to spend so much money, don't worry, because it won't cost so much. You know, you see how inexpensive the sycophants are—which is almost an allusion to the story in Xenophon. "You yourself gave me that excellent advice." Yes. Now?

Mr. Reinken:

> and moreover, if because you care for me you think you ought not to spend my money, there are foreigners here willing to spend theirs; and one of them, Simmias of Thebes, has brought for this especial purpose sufficient funds; and Cebes also and very many others are ready. So, as I say, do not give up saving

> yourself through fear of this. And do not be troubled by what you said in the court, that if you went away you would not know what to do with yourself. For in many other places, wherever you go, they will welcome you; and if you wish to go to Thessaly, I have friends there who will make much of you and will protect you, so that no one in Thessaly shall annoy you. (45b1-45c4)

LS: Yes. Yes, you remember—Thessaly is already known to us from the dream because of Phthia which was mentioned there. Apparently this is a new argument here, when he says in b7, in that *epeita*. But as the easy transition shows, Crito still thinks of money. Socrates must after all live with his family in Thessaly, and so the people who try to get him out not only have to pay the guard and these other people, but they also have to give money to Socrates on his way to and in Thessaly. So this is still a question here. Yes, now read only, slowly, the beginning of the following passage.

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "And besides, Socrates, it seems to me the thing you are undertaking—" (45c4-45c5)

LS: No, no, no: "furthermore." So a new argument: It does not seem to me even to be just, and so on and so on. So here Crito's third and last argument begins, and the three arguments are: first, Crito's reputation; b) Crito's money; and three, justice, or in other words, Socrates's duty. There was no question in the first two arguments of Socrates's reputation and of Socrates's money [in the first two arguments]—the latter because of its non-existence. But here now Socrates becomes a bit—so what is Socrates's duty? And now let us see what that duty is.

Mr. Reinken: "betraying yourself when you might—" (45c5-45c6)

LS: No,[44] begin at the beginning of the passage.

Mr. Reinken: "[And] besides, Socrates, it does not seem even just to me the thing you are undertaking to do[xiv]—betraying yourself when you might save yourself. And you are eager to bring upon yourself just what your enemies would wish and just what those were eager for who wished to destroy you." (45c4-45c9)

LS: Ya. So in other words, this[45] is Socrates's duty toward himself, we can say: his self-preservation. And there is a simple practical criterion of what you should not do to yourself, namely, you should not do to yourself what your enemies wish to do to you. [LS laughs] It's not bad as a practical rule, although[46] it's not universally true because your enemies might be fools, and do to you things in order to harm you which are to your benefit, so we have always to use our judgment. But still, as a crude rule of thumb it is not so bad. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And moreover—" (45c9)

LS: You see, another argument. Yes?

[xiv] In original: "it seems to me the thing you are undertaking to do is not even right—"

Mr. Reinken: "moreover, I think you are abandoning your children, too, for when—" (45c9-45c10)

LS: Yes, yes, all right, "your sons."

Mr. Reinken: Sons.

LS: Yes?

Mr Reinken:

> for when you might bring them up and educate them, you are going to desert them and go away, and, so far as you are concerned, their fortunes in life will be whatever they happen to meet with, and they will probably meet with such treatment as generally comes to orphans in their destitution. No. Either one ought not to beget children, or one to ought to stay by them and bring them up and educate them. But you seem to me to be choosing the laziest way. (45c10-45d8)

LS: Yes. Yes, so now Socrates's duty [is] towards his sons, as distinguished from himself. And what Crito suggests is: You are an irresponsible hedonist or egoist; instead of taking the troubles with your children you prefer the easy way out. This is the whole argument regarding Socrates's duty,[47] as we will see immediately. What does he omit? Without all the duties towards one's children, Crito doesn't say anything of Socrates's duty towards the polis, which is of course very beautifully done by Plato. So this is then the big engine which makes Plato bring in in his reply. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: He doesn't speak of Socrates's duty to continue philosophizing.

LS: You expect much too much. [Laughter] As far as I know the word philosophy never occurs in the *Crito*.

Mr. Reinken: But he could at least have said that he would be good for Thessaly.

LS: Ya, but [LS laughs] he was a practical man, a pedestrian fellow. And "me first," and with obvious limitations. He was also certainly concerned with the *epitēdeioi*, with those who did him a good turn and are likely to do him some other good turns. Now of course, we must keep this argument in mind, and all the various steps, in order to see how Socrates is going to reply to them. He doesn't have to reply to the money matter because Crito himself has said it won't cost Crito a cent; it will all be done by the friends from Thebes, and that he doesn't have to take up. But the other things he might have to take up. Now let us go on in 45d6 to 8.

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "and you ought to choose as a good and brave man would choose, you who have been saying all your life that you cared for virtue." (45d9-45d11)

LS: Ya,[48] that should be translated a bit more strongly: "claiming," as it were, "claiming you of all people who claimed throughout your life to be concerned with virtue, you should surely behave like a virtuous man." Namely, one can say this is a general remark on Socrates's duty, whereas the preceding ones were specific. Socrates, at any rate, of all people must choose what a good and manly man would choose.[49] Crito doesn't speak of good and sensible, but of good and manly, which is also characteristic. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "So I am ashamed both for—" (45d11-45e1)

LS: For the same reason for which he spoke as the argument taken from the enemies as a good argument, because concern with enemies belongs to the sphere of courage and manliness. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "So I am ashamed both for you and for us, your friends, and I am afraid people will think that this whole affair of yours has been conducted with a sort of cowardice—" (45d11-45e2).

LS: Ya, "think" is always the word for opinion, opine.[50]

Mr. Reinken: "were they of opinion[xv] that the[xvi] whole affair had[xvii] been conducted with a sort of cowardice on our part—both the fact that the case came before the court, when it might have been avoided, and the way in which the trial itself was carried on, and finally—" (45e2-45e6)

LS: [Laughs] Namely, what Socrates did when defending himself. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "they will opine,[xviii] as the crowning absurdity of the whole affair, that this opportunity has escaped us through some base cowardice on our part, since we did not save you, and you did not save yourself, though it was quite possible if we had been of any use whatever. Take care, Socrates, that these things be not disgraceful, as well as evil, both to you and to us." (45e6-46a4)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. So you see, Crito returns now via Socrates's duty to the subject with which he began, but changing it somewhat. The subject is "our reputation," that is to say of course Socrates's reputation but also Crito's reputation. For the question of money has been disposed of as we have seen in a3, at the end of what Mr. Reinken read: "See that it be not together with the evil also ugly, base for us. The evil is the death, the loss of a friend, and other things of this kind. The disgraceful death refers to the reputation. So[51] he returned then to this subject.[52] He began with Crito's reputation, Crito's money, Socrates's duty, Socrates's overall duty to act like a virtuous and brave man, and then, finally, Socrates's and Crito's reputation, and therefore, in particular also again Crito's reputation. It is a nice circle. So here there is a point

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[xv] In original: "people will think"
[xvi] In original: "this"
[xvii] In original: "affair of yours had"
[xviii] In original: "they will think"

which Burnet makes which I thought we should consider, [on] e 3 [to] e 4.[53] The word which he doesn't bring out—he uses the word "absurdity" somewhere.

Student: "The crowning absurdity."

LS: Ya, "the crowning": the word is a derivative from the word for laughter, and which is brought out by Burnet by saying "we should have to suppose that Crito[xix] regarded the trial of Socrates as a comedy," one of the wisest remarks which Burnet, in my opinion, ever makes in this one. (Burnet 1964, 265) Now "and when he speaks of this contest, this doubtless refers to the refusal of Socrates to defend himself seriously and to his counterproposal," namely, you know, [the] prytaneum, "which was a mere defiance of the court." Well, but if you think a bit straight, if Socrates here refuses to defend himself seriously, then he defended himself unseriously, and which is very hard to distinguish from comically. Good. Now let us go on where we left off.

Mr. Reinken: "Just consider, or rather is it time not to consider any longer, but to have finished considering. And there is just one possible plan; for all this must be done the coming night. And if we delay it can no longer be done. But I beg you, Socrates, do what I say and don't refuse." (46a5-46a10)

LS: Yes. Now here is a point which Burnet makes. Speaking of the coming night, the last opportunity. "Crito still thinks, in spite of the dream, that the ship will arrive to-day;" i.e., that Socrates has another night at his disposal. (Burnet 1964, 267) Now what do you say of that, in spite of the dream? Is this not funny? He regards it as possible that this nice gentleman farmer is in any way[54] impressed by Socrates's dream, you see—I mean, that's the reason why I read you this point. So this is then the whole speech of Crito. And the sequel is Socrates's reply, and the reply[55] by which Socrates tries to prove to Crito that Socrates must stay in Athens and die. And of course this goes without saying or, rather, I should say it should go without saying [that] he proves this in a way intelligible to Crito. What would be the use if this were an argument which would be intelligible to, say, Kant, if he is talking to poor Crito? Now that is the reason why[56] we must always watch what[57] we [might] get about the character of Crito, you know, so that we can see toward whom Socrates is speaking and adapting his argument. And if I may repeat a thing which I have said so many times that some of you will regard it as nauseating: in all Platonic dialogues, in all, surely in this, Socrates [LS writes on the blackboard] speaks somewhat here—to say talking down is in one sense correct, but not in that nasty sense in which the expression "talking down" is meant, because[58] Crito doesn't have the impression, or any other interlocutor of Socrates, that he is talking down to him, whereas when you say of someone he is talking down to someone else you mean the other, the addressee, notices it, and that is indeed a sign of lack of humanity or urbanity.[59] But in fact he [Socrates] addresses him[60] [and adapts] himself to the capacity of the interlocutor, and therefore if we want to know what Socrates thinks of this argument or of how he would state it for himself or someone to whom he would not to have talked down [to], we have to consider the peculiarity of that X. For example, in the case, say, of Critobulus, Crito's son, he[61] might very well talk this way, for all I know, ya? It depends. And the task would be to replace these lines with this one. And that means that we must try within the

[xix] In original: "he"

limits of our possibility to become better men; otherwise we will not be able to make this transformation. So much is it true that according to Socrates and Plato virtue is knowledge. It[62] is a long story whether that is simply true, but there is a lot of truth in that, and that is why. Good. And we have to try to do that within the limits of our power. Now let us go on.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "My dear Crito, your eagerness is worth a great deal, if it should prove to be rightly directed; but otherwise, the greater it is, the more hard to bear." (46b1-46b4)

LS: Ya, the word "eagerness," or "zeal"—in Greek, *prothymia*—is a compound part of which is the word *thymos*, a word well known especially from the *Republic* and there ordinarily translated as spiritedness. Spiritedness must be controlled by reason. Now that is what Socrates says here in a way: Your eagerness is nice if it is correct. If it is put to a wrong use or to a wrong end it would be bad. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "So we must examine the question whether we ought to do this or not; for I am not only now but always a man who follows nothing but the reasoning which[63] [on] consideration seems to me best." (46b4-46b7)

LS: Ya, that is not well enough translated. "[64]Not only now, but always I am such a man as to obey," or "to follow," "to nothing other of my things except to the *logos*," "to the reasoning," "which on reasoning appears to me to be best." Now, first we see [that] Socrates invites Crito to a common deliberation. "We must," plural. But Socrates follows his own judgment, which does not necessarily agree with that of Crito. Socrates may have to obey something other than his logos. Does this make sense, that he may have to obey something other than his logos?

Student: The laws.[65]

LS: Perhaps, yes. But also?

Student: Someone else's law.

Different student: *Daimonion*.

LS: *Daimonion*. A law is as a rule another man's law. But there is another passage. If you will look that up[66] in the *Apology*, 20e5 to 6. "I shall not tell you my *logos*, but I will[67] trace it to a speaker who is trustworthy in your eyes." That was not—in other words, not Socrates's logos, but someone else's *logos*. In that case it was the logos of Chaerephon or of Apollo; that's hard to say. So Socrates does not always follow his *logos*, but he follows of the things belonging to him the best *logos* which appears to him for the time being, rather than anything else. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And I cannot, now that this has happened to us, discard the arguments I used to advance—" (46b7-49b9)

LS: "Arguments" is always *logoi*.

Mr. Reinken: Speeches.

LS: Ya.

Mr. Reinken: "discard the speeches[xx] I used to advance, but they seem to me much the same as ever, and I revere and honour the same ones as before. And unless we can bring forward better ones in our present situation, be assured that I shall not give way to you, not even if the power of the many[xxi] frighten us with even more terrors than at present, as children are frightened with goblins, threatening with us with imprisonments and deaths and confiscations of property." (46b8-46c7)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. You see incidentally that death is here in the center, and here that's a rather obvious case, why it is in the center, because according to a very widespread opinion death is a greater evil than imprisonment and confiscation of property. Now no chance, no work of chance of any kind, can make the *logoi*, the reasonings, doubtful. But perhaps other *logoi*, better *logoi*; this could happen. Could these better *logoi* not be occasioned, however, by[68] a stroke of chance which was not considered before? Take a very simple example. You have a good *logos*, a good rule, let me say, regarding warfare. And then by a piece of chance something else occurs and you see that this *logos* is not so good. Then you will of course be induced by that piece of chance to replace a former *logos* by another one. The acts of the multitude are acts of chance, as was said more than once. But must the *logos* not also consider[69] these acts of chance, the general character of the acts of the multitude? That is the question. Now here is an argument of Burnet's. The expression which he uses here in 46c5, "*epipempousa*,"Burnet says: "'setting upon us', 'letting loose upon us'. In this sense the[xxii] verb is generally used of the gods, and is almost technical of divine 'visitations' . . . . The effect of the word is, therefore, to suggest that the power of the many, *he tōn pollōn dynamis* is something mysterious and of supernatural power." (Burnet 1964, 269-270) That is a point to which I drew your attention before, and therefore it is a question whether one can simply dismiss it as at first glance it would seem to be. I refer to what I said on 44d to e1. Now?

Mr. Reinken: "Now how could we examine the matter most reasonably? By taking up first what you say about opinions and asking whether we were right—" (46c7-46c10)

LS: No, wait. "What you say about opinions." Ya, "that *logos*," "that rule," we can say, "which you state regarding opinions." But did Crito state any logos regarding opinions? No, but Socrates did. But in 44c6 to 9, where Socrates contrasted the opinion of the many with what the most respectable people might think. But Crito did not protest against[70] that distinction; to that extent one can say, politely, it was Crito's *logos*, whereas in fact it is Socrates's, and the word which he uses. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:

[xx] In original: "arguments"
[xxi] In original: "the multitude"
[xxii] In original: "In this sense too the"

> and asking whether we were right when we always used to say that we ought to pay attention to some opinions and not to others? Or were we right before I was condemned to death, whereas it has now been made clear that we were talking merely for the sake of argument and it was really mere play and nonsense? And I wish to investigate, Crito, in common with you, and see whether our former argument seems different to me under our present conditions, or the same, and whether we shall give it up or be guided by it. But it used to be said, I think, by those who thought they were speaking sensibly, just as I was saying now, that of the opinions held by men some ought to be highly esteemed and others not. (46c9-46e2)

LS: Ya. Now let us stop here. Now there is a repeated statement regarding[71] which opinions should be respected and which should not. And where is this point? "The opinions which human beings opine."[xxiii] (46d12-46e1) This is a new element stated in the repetition of the thing. The question concerns the opinions of human beings,[72] and human being may very well be understood in all Platonic[73] texts in contradistinction to *andres*, to *hombres*, to men of stature and/or fortune. Now there may be some opinions of the multitude which[74] deserve respect. The word which he uses frequently, more frequently in the original than in the translation, "every time," contains an important pointer, meaning that[75] you have reached a result: that is now your opinion, but you must always reconsider it. Of course[76] you can't do it all the time but on every reasonable occasion, because you might have made a mistake. Therefore, Socrates says somewhere in Xenophon, there is nothing like having another look at the matter. One must always be willing to have such another look. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> By the gods[xxiv], Crito, do you not think this is correct? For you, humanly speaking, are not involved in the necessity of dying to-morrow, and therefore present conditions would not lead your judgment astray. Now say, do you not think we were correct in saying that we ought not to esteem all the opinions of men, but some and not others, and not those of all men, but only of some? What do you think. Is not this true?
> It is. (46e2-47a5)

LS: Now,[77] seemingly the same distinctions [are repeated for a third time]. But[78] by thinking on that, we have arrived at the question: Which opinions of the multitude deserve respect? And now,[79] if you see at the beginning of what Mr. Reinken reads now, the sermon, the oath, "by the gods," and the line thereafter, "the human things" opposed. Perhaps the opinions of the multitude regarding the gods deserve some respect. But Socrates makes now a new distinction. First, not all opinions deserve respect. Good. Second, not the opinions of all men, which is a very different consideration. But is it not sufficient to consider the opinions by themselves, regardless of[80] the men are who hold them? Why must one consider the men who hold it? Now, in all cases in which we do not have judgment on the subject matter, we have to trust experts—say, medicine,

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[xxiii] In Loeb edition: "the opinions held by men"
[xxiv] In original: "in God's name"

or whatever it may be—hence we must first[81] find out who is an expert. And that means for all practical purposes, who is regarded as an expert by the experts. That's a difficult circular procedure. I happen to know from a study by a classical scholar that the Greeks had a way out for that, at[82] least as far as physicians are concerned, namely,[83] there were no examinations. You know, today you can see, if you have your MD, that makes it plausible that you are an expert. But[84] there were no MDs in Greece, and[85] they did the following thing: the doctor had to establish his expertise at the sickbed. And he did it by making a prognosis of[86] [which] symptoms will happen. Say, he's going to have a higher temperature this afternoon, or the urine will be of that and that complexion. And now, if his prognosis, his prediction, proved to be right, then the non-experts could see that he was an expert. Ya, but this only in passing.

Now Socrates may be presumed to be influenced in his judgment by his imminent death; that he says here. But this cannot apply to Crito; after all he doesn't have to die tomorrow or today.[87] In other words, Socrates[88] [implies] that Crito is not as disturbed as he believes. Here is another point in Burnet which I would like to read to you. "Crito believes that[xxv] the ship will arrive to-day and [that] Socrates will have to die to-morrow. It is true that Socrates thought otherwise, but it would not have been worthwhile to contradict Crito[xxvi] on the point once more" (Burnet 1964, 271). So you know what kind of pedantism he imputes to Socrates. The true explanation is that Crito believes that Socrates will have to die tomorrow. His state of disturbance is a consequence of this belief, so there is no reason for making this remark. Yes. Now, go on—let us go on where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Then we ought to esteem the good opinions and not the bad ones?
> *Crito*: Yes.
> *Soc*: And the good ones are those of the wise and the bad ones those of the foolish?
> *Crito*: Of course. (47a6-47a9)

LS: Let us stop here.[89] All right, let us say that. The most interesting point [here] is[90] [not] to make a distinction between true and untrue opinions, but between good or useful ones and bad and harmful ones. And then above all the distinctions he made before [between] two kinds of opinions and two kinds of men are now dropped. The good opinions are those of the sensible men, and of course we have to take seriously the opinions of sensible men. And this means the opinions of the multitude do not deserve any respect, contrary to what we might have thought very commonsensically before. But Socrates now becomes much more radical while he proceeds and thus helps us in understanding better the radical problem. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Come then, what used we to say about this? If a man is an athlete and makes that his business, does he pay attention to every man's praise and blame and opinion or to those of one man only who is a physician or a trainer?

[xxv] "that" does not appear in the original.
[xxvi] In original: "him"

> *Crito*: To those of one man only.
> *Soc*: Then he ought to fear the blame and welcome the praise of that one man and not of the many.[xxvii]
> *Crito*: Obviously. (47a 10-47b 7).

LS: Ya. So now Socrates adds now praise and blame to opinion, because what affects us is not so much opinion as praise and blame, and what we fear are the blames. And the emphasis here is on the blames, as you see here in b2, where it is in the center. The reasonable, the sensible men, to whose opinion we should listen, are now replaced by the single sensible man, ya? And[91] that[92] is of some importance. Socrates comes to an utter disparagement of any many. Even if there are only three or four there is likely to be one and only one man whose opinion we should follow. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And he must act and exercise and eat and drink as the one man who is his director and [who] knows the business thinks best rather than as all the others think." (47b 7-47b) 10).

LS: Yes, and "all the others." Ya?

Mr. Reinken: "That is true." (47b10)

LS: Ya, so the man, the *hombre* seriously concerned with gymnastics must obey the opinion of the physician and the trainer. Also regarding food and drink, not only regarding other things. And this is quite interesting. It shows that there is a certain expansion, as it were, of the sphere of physical training into that of moral training because we must not eat too much, not drink too much, nor too little, which is at least a borderline case between dietetics and morality. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Well then; if he disobeys the one man and disregards his opinion and his praise, but regards the words of the many who have no special knowledge, will he not come to harm?
> *Crito*: Of course he will.
> *Soc*: And what is this harm? In what direction and upon what part of the one who disobeys does it act?
> *Crito*: Evidently upon his body; for that is what it ruins. (47c1-47c9)

LS: So now Socrates raises now almost invisibly the most fundamental question which has to be raised in this particular context: Why must one listen at all to praise and blame of the one expert as distinguished from the many? And then he gives an answer: for the sake of the wellbeing[93] of one's body. In other words, previously he had assumed the man is concerned with gymnastic training, and then, being concerned with it, we would of course listen to the expert regarding gymnastic training. But now Socrates gives a reason[94] why every man should engage in gymnastic training, namely,[95] if one is concerned with the wellbeing of one's body. In this way

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[xxvii] In original: "the multitude"

Socrates prepares, invisibly for the time being, the discussion of obedience to the laws. Are the lawgivers, the men who made the law, experts regarding the wellbeing of the soul? This will never be said here, because it would destroy the whole argument. But it is a question, a very important Socratic and Platonic question which we must keep in mind. And then if that is so, if the lawgivers are fumblers regarding the wellbeing of the soul rather than experts, then it becomes indeed a question: Why should one obey the laws at all? Well, there are good enough commonsensical, practical reasons—you don't want to go to jail, and so on—but this of course does not mean inner adherence to the laws, which is meant by loyalty. Yes. Now, go on.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Right. Then in other matters, not to enumerate them all, in questions of right and wrong and disgraceful and noble and good and bad, which we are now considering, ought we to follow and fear the opinion of the many or that of the one, if there is anyone who knows about them—" (47c7-47d2)

LS: "If there is any expert." Ya?

Mr. Reinken: [96]"Whom we ought to revere and fear more than all the others?" (47d2-47d3)

LS: Now let us stop here. Now Socrates applies what he found out regarding the things contributing to health or illness. He applied that now to the just, noble, and good things, what we call the moral things. In that sphere, too, one must follow the single expert rather than the opinion of the many. From the point of view of a younger follower of Socrates,[97] he [would say that he] follows rather Socrates than what the whole city says. But Socrates makes here a grave qualification: if there is such an expert. But then we have to raise the question: What ought we to do if there is no such expert regarding these matters? If the best thing we can find among men is knowledge of ignorance regarding these matters, as was said in the *Apology*, must we then not obey the opinion of the non-experts, i.e., the opinion of the many, i.e., the laws?[98] That is a great question.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: And if we do not follow him, we shall injure and cripple that which we use to say is benefited by the right and is ruined by the wrong. Or is there nothing in this?
> *Crito*: I think it is true, Socrates. (47d4-47d8)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. Now, what is that which is damaged by injustice and improved by justice? What is that? What would you say?

Student: The soul.[99]

LS: The soul. And here we see something which will be very important for the dialogue as a whole. The soul is not mentioned. It is only[100] the X, so to say. It is improved.[101] I use in such cases the expression abstraction from the soul. And I think abstraction from the soul is a characteristic of the *Crito*, and very important for the understanding of the *Crito*. Now let us see, there is a commentary of Burnet which is quite interesting, namely,[102] 47d 4. "'That

which . . . was made better by right and destroyed by wrong' . . . . As the doctrine is assumed to be familiar even to Crito, Plato means us to understand that Socrates actually taught that the soul[xxviii] was the seat of goodness and badness, a novel idea in the fifth century B.C. No doubt it is a[xxix] novelty of the doctrine that makes him avoid the actual word soul[xxx103] in this passage." (Burnet 1964, 272-273) I think that's pique. I believe those of you who have read what we have read hitherto in this course know that Burnet is wrong, namely, "it is the novelty of the doctrine that makes him avoid the actual word soul." Please.

Student: The Delphic oracles.

LS: No[104], that's not the level. Very simple. Ya?

Student: Crito's concern is with physical things, like money, not with things like the soul.

LS: No, here we are concerned with—let us stick to the point.

Student: He doesn't give a true explanation for his activity because the many won't understand it, and therefore he tells them—

LS: No,[105] it's funny how difficult it is to see the most elementary and obvious thing.

Student: Isn't there a passage in Homer, which[106] implies that—

LS: No, but the question is what *psychē* means in Homer[107]. Burnet is very learned, and—no, but[108] that doesn't need any learning in order to see. Well, we have read the *Apology*. In the *Apology* he speaks two or three times of caring for the soul, and [of the soul] as the seat of all virtue. And[109] I give you the passages which I remember: 29e1 to 3, and 30b1 to 2. And I must say, the beauty of that "no doubt" is transcendent. And that is presumably—and the interesting question is: How is it possible that a man of the learning and the intelligence of Burnet can make such mistake like that? Ya, there is one point which[110] one must respect very highly, that he is aware of the fact that this is a funny expression,[111] which is improved by justice and ruined by injustice, you know? Instead of saying plainly "the soul." That he has seen, and that is the merit. But the explanation he gives of that by a very farfetched theory [is] contradicted by the very sister work, the *Apology* to which he wrote a long commentary,[112] one wouldn't believe [it] if one did not know notice that Plato might have deeper reasons for avoiding that word here when it is so obvious he doesn't even consider, because that is not the way in which he reads Plato. Plato is an open book. And the only thing which you need[113], of course, apart from [a] thorough knowledge of Greek grammar and so on, is a knowledge of Greek science and so on at that time, which Burnet doubtless possessed, being an expert in that matter. So we, however, who are not so cocksure, will say this is an occasion for wondering why[114] Plato avoids here and also in the sequel the word "soul" in this particular dialogue. Well, since we have a vacation now[115], you

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[xxviii] In original: "psyche" (in Greek letters)
[xxix] In original: "the"
[xxx] In original: "psyche" (in Greek letters)

will forget what I say now, perhaps—the turkey and all the other good things—I will give you an answer which I can immediately substantiate through the *Laws*, Plato's *Laws*. And there Burnet would say immediately: Oh, the *Laws* were written much later, and therefore[116] you can't use them for interpreting the *Crito*, to which I would reply: How do you know that Plato didn't think of something mentioned only in the *Laws* when[117] he was twenty? No one can know.

Now the key question is this: What is[118] [it that] men must honor?[119] Every man must honor certain things: the parents, the gods, the soul. And now at a certain passage in the *Laws*, which I will mention later on, when we read that we are compelled to raise the question: What does one have to honor most in case of conflict, the parents, or the soul,[120] [or] fatherland (that is very closely akin as we will hear from this text)? So what should[121] one honor most in case of conflict: the soul or the city, the country? A problem which I believe is intelligible. And now, by disregarding the soul, by abstracting from the soul it is very easy to say one must obey the country right or wrong. And that is in a way the answer given to old Crito here, because that is best for him in this situation. In other situations it might be necessary to take it up. Good.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "of the fact—."

[2] Deleted "you can—."

[3] Deleted "is—."

[4] Deleted "ordinary—."

[5] Deleted "from the actuality."

[6] Deleted "and."

[7] Deleted "Of—."

[8] Deleted "From the, you know."

[9] Deleted "but."

[10] Deleted "it—."

[11] Deleted "there is no—there is—."

[12] Deleted "took—."

[13] Deleted "the—."

[14] Deleted "if that is—makes—."

[15] Deleted "saying—."

[16] Deleted "namely—."

[17] Deleted "I."

[18] Deleted "LS: No."

[19] Deleted "LS: No.

Londow: There are no—and."

[20] Deleted "It—."

[21] Deleted “that the—the difference of regimes was—was—was neutral with respect to—in—I mean, that although, perhaps.”

[22] Deleted “That the god—

LS: Yes—.”

[23] Deleted “Without—but there are—.”

[24] Deleted “in this—.”

[26] Deleted “yes, I have not—.”

[27] Deleted “what about—.”

[28] Deleted “There were some—here—.”

[29] Deleted “Let us first begin—we must—.”

[30] Deleted “higher than mere human—.”

[31] Deleted “Why does one necessarily win fame by abide—abiding by the law?

LS: Pardon?”

[32] Deleted “LS: Acquiring fame by—

A: By abiding by the law.

LS: Is—is it not the—.”

[33] Deleted “‘the—.’”

[34] Deleted “This has to do—you—.”

[35] Deleted “have—be come—.”

[36] Deleted “the.”

[37] Deleted “because they could not—.”

[38] Deleted “inflict the greatest good—.”

[39] Deleted “Could—.”

[40] Deleted “Yeah, we know—well, that is—.”

[41] Deleted “who would—.”

[42] Deleted “on the whole”

[43] Deleted “it would—.”

[44] Deleted “you.”

[45] Deleted “is first—is said—.”

[46] Deleted “it might be—.”

[47] Deleted “now—a.”

[48] Deleted “that is—.”

[49] Deleted “He—.”

[50] Deleted “Alright. Begin or a little. Good.”

[51] Deleted “he returns.”

[52] Deleted “To—.”

[53] Changed from “to e 3 and e 4.”

[54] Deleted “interest—.”

[55] Deleted “which—.”

[56] Deleted “our—.”

[57] Moved “might.”

[58] Deleted “Socrates—there is surely no—.”

[59] Deleted “Socrates—.”

[60] Deleted “he adopts.”

[61] Deleted “would—.”

[62] Deleted “is not—.”

[63] Deleted “‘in.’”

[64] Deleted “‘That—are—.’”

[65] Deleted “LS: Pardon?

A: The law.”

[66] Deleted “in *Apology*—.”

[67] Deleted “lead it up….”

[68] Deleted “a piece—.”

[69] Deleted “them.”

[70] Deleted “the—.”

[71] Deleted “opinion.”

[72] Deleted “Of human—.”

[73] Deleted “point—.”

[74] Deleted “have—.”

[75] Deleted “one must always—.”

[76] Deleted “not—.”

[77] Deleted “yeah—now, it’s—that is still a—a third time repeated.”

[78] Deleted “on—.”

[79] Deleted “as is—.”

[80] Deleted “who.”

[81] Deleted “out—.”

[82] Deleted “as—as.”

[83] Deleted “they tested—they—.”

[84] Deleted “the Greeks—.”

[85] Deleted “what—.”

[86] Deleted “what.”

[87] Deleted “Crito is—.”

[88] Deleted “implied that Socrates—a—.”

[89] Deleted “Now the good ones are all—.”

[90] Moved “here.”

[91] Deleted “in—in—and.”

[92] Deleted “is not—.”

[93] Deleted “of one’s betty.”

[94] Deleted “why one should engage at all—.”

[95] Deleted “be—in order to—.”

[96] Deleted “Expert—who knows about—expert—.”

[97] Moved “would say.”

[98] Deleted “If there is no—.”

[99] Deleted “LS: Pardon?

A: Soul?”

[100] Deleted “that—.”

[101] Deleted “We can—I—.”

[102] Deleted “407—.”

[103] The original reads “ψυχή.”

[104] Deleted “The—the—not—not that, no.”

[105] Deleted “In—it—.”

[106] Deleted “is—.”

[107] Deleted “whether it means—and that’s very—oh no, burr—.”

[108] Deleted “something which we will not have any learning—.”

[109] Deleted “I must say, one cannot—I—.”

[110] Deleted “you—.”

[111] Deleted “that.”

[112] Deleted “that is—.”

[113] Deleted “is.”

[114] Deleted “does.”

[115] Deleted “and I hope—I—I—you—.”

[116] Deleted “they—.”

[117] Deleted “he was already—why did he not think of it—how do you know he did not think of it when.”

[118] Deleted “to—there are—.”

[119] Deleted “Certain—.”

[120] Deleted “And parents—father, and.”

[121] Deleted “we—.”

Session 12: November 29, 1966

Leo Strauss: [1]But I will give you a broad question.[i] And everyone who has followed the course with normal intelligence and assiduity should have no difficulty in passing. That's all I can say, because if I would go beyond that I think I would be responsible for something approaching a rigged examination. And as we know from the history of the Sanitary District in Chicago[ii]—[laughter].

Now we have had a long interruption,[iii] and therefore we must begin with a broader consideration. The *Crito*, as other Platonic dialogues, conveys a teaching or a message. As conveying a teaching it is a philosophic work; as conveying a message it is a poetic work. All Platonic books are both philosophic and poetic. Some people say more precisely that they are dramatic, but drama is of course a kind of poetry. They all present a *logos*, a reasoning, and an *ergon*, a deed, but in such a way that the *logos* must be understood in the light of the deed, and the reason being that deeds are more trustworthy than speeches.[2] Since [the] deed is [the] poetic[3] and the logos is the philosophic ingredient,[4] this would [make it] seem that[5] philosophy is subordinated in the Platonic dialogues to poetry. And this would seem to be absurd on the face of it, and it is absurd. There is a *logos* conveyed by the deed which is higher or deeper than the explicit *logos*. The *logos* conveyed by the deed could well have been stated by Plato as a *logos*, but for certain reasons Plato did not do that. Now this is in accordance with Plato's explicit *logos* regarding the relation between philosophy and poetry. And we know this view from the *Apology*: you remember what Socrates said when he examined the poets; and we know it from the *Ion*, the *Banquet*, the *Republic*, and the *Laws*, and from other places. Now this view of the relation between philosophy and poetry follows from the *logos* according to which the unexamined life is not worth living. The most human life, that is, is the life of the highest awakeness in contradistinction to, let us say, mysterious creativity of the highest order or mysterious expression of experiences. The poets give expression to radically different experiences, if I may use this present-day expression. Think of the difference between Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe. There is no possibility of a poetic argument between these poets. The differences among the philosophers are no less great than the differences among the poets, but there is in principle the possibility of a philosophic discussion of their views of man and of the whole.

Now let us read one of the Platonic passages regarding poetry, and I think I'll take the passage in the Tenth Book of the *Republic*, 607b to c. Well, why don't you read it for us. Here it begins. (This passage, incidentally, has a parallel in the *Laws*, in the last book, 966e to 967c.)[6]

Mr. Reinken:

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[i] Strauss responds to a question about the exam. Most of his response, about format and schedule, has been deleted.

[ii] Strauss refers to a controversy involving allegations that civil service exams for Chicago's Cook County Sanitary District had been rigged. See "Job Selling at the Sanitary District," *Chicago Tribune*, August 11, 1966.

[iii] The Thanksgiving break.

> "Let us, then, conclude our return to the topic of poetry and our apology, and affirm that we really had good grounds then for dismissing her from our city, since such was her character. For reason constrained us. And let us further say to her, lest she condemn us for harshness and rusticity, that there is from of old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry. For such expressions as 'the yelping hound barking at her master and mighty in the idle babble of fools,' and 'the mob that masters those who are too wise for their own good,' and the subtle thinkers who reason that after all they are poor, and countless others are tokens of this ancient enmity. But nevertheless let it be declared that, if the mimetic and dulcet poetry can show any reason for her existence in a well-governed city,[iv] we would gladly admit her, since we ourselves are very conscious of her spell. But all the same it would be impious to betray what we believe to be the truth."[v]

LS: I think we may stop here. Thank you. So Plato speaks here of that quarrel, that old quarrel or feud between philosophy and poetry. Now we have some evidence for that feud, for example, among the fragments of Heraclitus speaking against Homer and hence for philosophy. But who speaks for the poets? These passages which Plato quotes here are of unknown source. There are some speculations and . . . . But they remind obviously of comic poetry rather than non-comic poetry. This language is not tragic in any way. The most famous document we have stating the case for poetry against philosophy is Aristophanes's *Clouds*, to which one would have to add also some of his other comedies, if not all of them. Not the tragedies; they are of no use in this respect, and the reason is this: that the philosopher as philosopher is an object of comedy, ridiculous, as Plato himself says. He is not an object of pity; then he would belong to tragedy. And the second reason, which is no more or less important, is that the comic poet speaks about poetry, for he speaks about himself. This is of course not true of all comic poetry but of classic Greek poetry, which always contained a part called the parabasis, in which the chorus speaks in the name of the poet and frequently about the poet, about his poetry and his superiority to that of his rivals. There is no possibility for the tragic poet to speak about himself and his poetry in a tragedy, and the reason is that in a tragedy it would destroy the dramatic illusion, and that is fatal to the effect of tragedy. But the destruction of the comic illusion is itself comic, and therefore it is all right.

Now there is a parallel to this difference between comic and tragic poetry among the two greatest predramatic Greek poets. Homer does not speak about himself, and he cannot speak about himself—after all, he[7] does not belong to the mythic age. He does speak about himself only indirectly, because in his work there occur characters who do what Homer does: the minstrels and Odysseus, who also tells stories in the Homeric vein. In a way Homer speaks also, but that is less obvious, through his most general statement about the whole, namely, the shield of Achilles. But this is more complicated. The other great poet of Greek antiquity is Hesiod. Hesiod can speak about himself, and especially in his work called[8] *Works and Days*, because he is not a mythical man, a mythical hero, but a peasant or a son of a peasant and having all kinds of troubles with his good-for-nothing brother and so on. And[9] this seems to be autobiographic and perhaps it is, but it is much more than autobiographic. And see if they can do that. So Hesiod in

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[iv] In original: "well-governed state"

[v] *Republic* 607b1-607c10. Strauss reads from the translation by Paul Shorey in the Loeb Classical edition.

this respect is closer to comedy than Homer is and perhaps the central position of Hesiod[10] towards the end of the *Apology*, to which I drew your attention, is better understood in the light of this observation.

Now as for Aristophanes's critique of Socrates, of the philosopher and Plato's reply to that critique, we may have an opportunity perhaps to speak about this interesting subject later on in this course. Now I will turn to the *Crito* in particular. Crito, we'll remember, tries to persuade Socrates to escape from prison by adducing three reasons. First, Crito's reputation is going to suffer if Socrates will be executed. [Second][11], Crito will not incur any monetary loss if Socrates escapes. And three, it is Socrates's duty toward himself and his sons to escape. That is to say, Socrates and his friends will be regarded as worthless people if Socrates does not escape. Hence Crito ends as he begins, with his concern with his reputation. We also saw that[12] Crito forgets entirely Socrates's duty towards the city.

Now Socrates's rejoinder, which we began to read last time: Socrates will follow the *logos* which on reasoning comes to sight to him as the best *logos*. He will be wholly uninfluenced by the present misfortune, because what is true and right remains true and right regardless of the situation in which you are. Crito is concerned with what people might think or say, with *doxa* in the two senses of the word: opinion and reputation. The *logos* to which Socrates appeals says some opinions are good and some are bad. The opinions of the knowers are good; those of the ignorant multitude are bad, and therefore do not deserve any respect. For instance, one must respect the opinions of physicians and gymnastic trainers in the interest of the wellbeing of one's body. And correspondingly, and above all, one must respect the opinions of the knowers or experts regarding just, noble, and good things and the opposite in the interest of the wellbeing of one's soul.[13] If there are such experts: according to the *Apology*, there are no such experts because the ignorance. We have also observed that Socrates avoids the term "soul" here, and we will come back to that. And I only make this general remark that he abstracts—his avoiding the term "soul" means that he abstracts from the soul, and we will see later on what that means. And I think at this point we should continue our reading of the *Crito*, 47d7, if this is a good way to begin again.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Well then, if through yielding to the opinion of the ignorant we ruin that which is benefited by health and injured by disease, is life worth living for us when that is ruined? And that is the body, is it not?
> *Crito*: Yes. (47d9-47e3)

LS: You see, he in this case he spells it out: that which is affected positively or negatively is the body. All the more striking is the fact that he does not spell it out in the case of the soul. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Yes," says Crito.

> *Soc*: Then is life worth living when the body is worthless and ruined?
> *Crito*: Certainly not. (47d-e)

LS: And that is of course[14] not entirely unimportant for the *Crito* because generally speaking, deterioration of the body takes place when men get old, and Socrates puts a great emphasis on his being quite old.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "But is it worth living when that is ruined which is injured by the wrong and improved by the right?" (47e7-47e 9).

LS: What is "that"?

Mr. Reinken: The soul.

LS: You see, he avoids it again.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Or do we think that part of us, whatever it is, which is concerned with right and wrong, is less important than the body?
> *Crito*: By no means.
> *Soc*: But more important? (47e9-48a2)

LS: Ya, "but more to be honored," one could also say[15]. Here you see again he avoids the soul—and quite manifestly, I mean, that he is doing his best to make us see that he is doing just that. To live with a sick soul, that is of course implied, is much worse than death. And to anticipate the later argument, sickness of the soul is injustice, is disobeying the laws and hence one must not disobey the laws under any circumstances. Whether the argument is as simple as that remains to be seen. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Crito*: Much more.
> *Soc*: Then, most excellent friend, we must not consider at all what the many will say of us, but what he who knows about right and wrong, the one man, and truth herself will say. And so you introduced the discussion wrongly in the first place, when you began by saying we ought to consider the opinion of the many[vi] about the right and the noble and the good and their opposites. (48a2-48a10)

LS: Let us stop here. Now here Socrates concludes the first part of his argument: one must be concerned only with the view of the single expert regarding just and unjust things, and so on, or one must be concerned only with the truth itself. And one must do that in the interest of that part of ourself which is much more to be honored than our body. But we remember again the question: Is there such an expert? In the sequel you will see this question will be dropped. It[16] will be taken for granted that there is such an expert or that there are such experts, that there are physicians and gymnastic trainers regarding the body. And this of course has to be contrasted with the depreciation of human knowledge that we observed in the *Apology*. Yes?

[vi] In original: "the multitude"

Mr. Reinken:

Soc: But it might, of course, be said that the many[vii] can put us to death.
Crito: That is clear, too. (48a10-48b2)

LS: Ya, "someone might say." That is important; it's a kind of dialogue within the dialogue. And Burnet in his edition puts it into inverted commas,[17] as "someone might say." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "That is clear, too. It would be said, Socrates." (48b2-48b3)

LS: No, "someone might say."

Mr. Reinken: "Someone might say."

LS: "I'd say." "You are right." Ya. Now Socrates makes here a nameless man—"someone" raises an objection to his *logos*. It is a kind of dialogue within a dialogue and a device which Plato uses frequently. The objector belongs to the same kind of man as Crito. One must pay attention to the opinions of the many because the many have the power to kill. Socrates makes the objection because Crito is not able to do it. Crito was able to make a long speech setting forth his reasons but he cannot contradict Socrates, at least no longer, not on the present occasion. A certain change is going on in him of which we will find further traces. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "That is true. But, my friend—" (48b3)

LS: Not "my friend." He, *thaumasie*, "strange one." "You strange one."

Mr. Reinken: "But, you strange one—odd fellow—[viii]" (48b3)

LS: [Laughter] Hear, hear.

Mr. Reinken: "the argument we have just finished seems to me still much the same as before; and now see whether we still hold to this, or not, that it is not living, but living well which we ought to consider most honorable[ix]—" (48b3-48b7)

LS: Ya. Now one second. You see here a clear[18] distinction between the preceding argument which is now completed, and a new argument which is now beginning. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

Crito: We do hold to it.
Soc: And that living well and living rightly are the same thing, do we hold to that, or not? (48b7-48b9)

[vii] In original: "the multitude"
[viii] In original: "my friend"
[ix] In original: "important"

LS: Now,[19] well,[20] nobly and justly[21] [are] the same and does this remain or does it not? It remains. Now[22] let us consider the difference between these two *logoi*. The first[23] was [that] one must obey the opinion of the experts in general, and therefore the experts regarding the soul in particular. The following *logos*: not life as such but the good life is to be chosen, and the good life is identical with the noble life and identical with the just life. The preceding argument had admittedly abstracted from the power of the many, as you see, because this reference to the power of the many came in at the end. The following *logos*, we must assume, will take the power of the many into account. And why is this the case? And the answer is this, as is already clear here but will become clear in the sequel: the following *logos*, which begins here, abstracts from the possibility that there might be experts regarding the good, noble, and just things. Now if this possibility is disregarded, then it follows that in the decisive respect all men, including such men as Socrates, belong to the many. And then of course it follows rather naturally that one must obey the opinion of the majority. I mean, that is a very commonsensical rule. If men are equal in the decisive respect, then in case of dissension the majority should have the way.[24] Try to figure out for yourself if you would make the opposite rule, say, in the case of discord the vote of the minority would be valid. What would happen? Everyone would vote against his opinion. So the majority would appear as the minority and vice versa. There is no alternative to the majority principle in this sense; it is a dictate of reason. And you can imagine that this is going to have very great consequences in the moment we forget now about the experts, i.e., about true knowledge in this field. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Then we agree that the question is whether it is right for me to try to escape from here without the permission of the Athenians, or not right. And if it appears to be right, let us try it, and if not, let us give it up. But the considerations you suggest, about spending money, and reputation, and bringing up my children, these are really, Crito, the reflections of those who lightly put men to death, and would bring them to life again, if they could, without any sense, I mean the many.[x] But we, since our argument so constrains us, must consider only the question we just broached, whether we shall be doing right in giving money and thanks to these men who will help me to escape, and in escaping or aiding the escape ourselves, or shall in truth be doing wrong, if we do all these things. And if it appears that it is wrong for us to do them, it may be that we ought not to consider either whether we must die if we stay here and keep quiet or whether we must endure anything else whatsoever, but only the question of doing wrong. (48b10-48d9)

LS: Yes. Now, since living well is identical with living nobly and with living justly, the only question, of course, is whether it is just to escape without the consent of the Athenians or not. Crito's consideration of money, reputation, and the upbringing of Socrates's sons are utterly irrelevant. Even our very deaths are utterly irrelevant compared with this consideration. Yes?

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[x] In original: "the multitude"

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "I think what you say is right, Socrates; but think what we should do." (48d 9-48d) 10).

LS: Yes, you see that Crito agrees with ease to the complete destruction of his original argument.[25] You remember where these three points, money, reputation, and Socrates's children have been brought up. So[26] in a way the issue is already settled. But Socrates goes on. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Let us, my good one[xi], investigate in common, and if you can contradict anything I say, do so, and I will yield to your arguments—" (48d10-48e1)

LS: Yes, that is very strange. A true skepsis in the original[27] meaning of the word, a consideration; "looking at." The issue is not yet settled. But the mere contradiction on the part of Crito would be sufficient for Socrates to follow Crito's advice. Is Crito then an expert on justice, so that[28] we would obey Crito as we obey a physician? Hardly. I mean, I think no one[29] has ever suggested such a thing. But Socrates knows that Crito is not able to contradict, as we have seen before, at least not in the present situation.

Now you must have seen despite the translation that Socrates uses here, for example, the expression "you good one." And in the line following, which we have not read, he calls him, "you blessed one." I translate literally. Formerly he called him "you strange one," and "you best one." Now there is a strange density of adjectives in the vocative here. That occurred only once before in the *Crito*, in 44c6, and will occur never after. Generally when Socrates addresses Crito, before or after he says, "o Crito," o Crito, and does not use these adjectives. Now[30] everyone who has ever read Platonic dialogues knows that these kind of appellations occur[31] here and there. But it is very hard in the other cases known to me to see a principle there, although Plato surely didn't choose either the proper name or such an adjective in an entirely haphazard manner. Here I think we can understand it. The density of these vocatives, of these peculiar kind[s] of vocatives, occurs first at the end of the argument regarding experts and it ends at the beginning of the consideration, the skepsis, as to whether it is just to escape from prison. That is to say, it occurs during the transition from the consideration of the experts to the substantive consideration based on the complete disregard of the experts. In other words,[32] it accompanies this change of atmosphere from consideration of experts to their disregard. Perhaps[33] there is more to that, but this I think we can safely say. Now, will you re-read what you just read, Mr. Reinken, the sentence and—

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Let us, my good one[xii], investigate in common, and if you can contradict anything I say, do so, and I will yield to your arguments; but if you—" (48d10-48e1)

LS: Ya, "your arguments" is not even said; and "I will obey you," "I will follow you." Yes?

[xi] In original: "friend"
[xii] In original: "friend"

Mr. Reinken: "I will—and I will obey[xiii]; but if you cannot, my blessed one[xiv], stop at once saying the same thing to me over and over, that I ought to go away from here without the consent of the Athenians; for I am anxious to act in this matter with your approval, and not contrary to your wishes." (48e1-48e6)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. The translation doesn't bring out here that[34] he says first that "you say[35] that I must go away against the will of the Athenians." And Socrates says: "I will not stay here against the will of Crito."[36] The same word[37] occurs.[38] Socrates doesn't wish to run away against the will of the Athenians and he doesn't wish to stay against the will of Crito, which means he wishes to reconcile Crito to the Athenians. Crito is in a state of inner rebellion and[39] the purpose of the conversation is to reconcile Crito to the Athenians. And there he can appeal[40] [to] various motives in Crito. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Now see if the beginning of the investigation satisfies you, and try to reply to my questions to the best of your belief." (48e6-49a1)

LS: Now the beginning of the investigation, that has to be taken very literally—that major planner, the starting point, of the investigation.[41]

Mr. Reinken:

> *Crito*: "I will try."
> *Soc*: "Ought we in no way to do wrong intentionally, or should we do wrong in some ways but not in others?" (49a1-49a4)

LS: Now let us stop here perhaps for a moment. The starting point of the inquiry is this: one must never, in any way, wrong anyone voluntarily. That is the starting point. And[42] that is of course here an opinion, not knowledge, because it is simply set forth. Now let us consider this for one moment.[43] This opinion implies [that] no one is to be blamed for wronging people involuntarily. For example, if someone forces you by literally forcing your fingers to shoot and kill someone, no one would say you have murdered that man. In that case you do not [do] wrong at all. But Socrates means much more than this by speaking[44] voluntarily here. You remember the argument in the *Apology*, 25e to 26a: no one corrupts anyone voluntarily, for no one chooses voluntarily what would harm him. And just as you would not[45] make a dog[46] vicious [simply] because he would jump at you first, you would not make human beings vicious because you would be their victim. This argument is used there, as you recall. But[47] now we must replace however,[48] in order to see what Socrates means, the word "voluntarily" by the word "knowingly." No one chooses knowingly what would harm him. This argument occurs, for example, in the *Meno*, 77c to 78a.[49] We choose all the time wrong things without knowing, but no one chooses knowingly what would harm him—which is a difficult proposition. If you think of such vices as smoking, people know that they shouldn't smoke [but] smoke nevertheless.[50] And we cannot go into this big question now but, at any rate, it is a common Socratic assertion.

[xiii] In original: "I will yield to your arguments"
[xiv] In original: "dear friend"

Now if the bad things are identical with the base things and with the just things, it follows that no one chooses knowingly the unjust things. Or, in other words, all unjust actions are involuntary, a thesis discussed at some length in the *Laws*, 861c to d. Now if this is so, and that is a very paradoxical assertion, all acts of injustice, all bad choices are involuntary since they proceed from ignorance. And hence only the knower, only the expert regarding the good and just things, can choose correctly. By speaking of voluntarily wrongdoing, Socrates reminds us therefore of the problem of the knower or the expert, which is here silently dropped; it is no longer the theme in this section. And you will see, he will drop this qualification "voluntarily" in the sequel because[51] we are reminded[52] [that] the whole argument which follows is no longer valid. Yes. Now, go on.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Or, as we often agreed in former times, is it never right or honourable to do wrong? Or have—" (49a 4-49a 6)

LS: Now wait a moment here. "As we always agreed in former times and as was said also now."[53] Or is this not[54] [it]? Read Fowler's note.[55]

Mr. Reinken: "The words *oper kai arti elegeto*, 'as has just been said, too,' follow in the MSS. but are omitted by Schanz and others." (Fowler 1966, 170)

LS: Ya, and Burnet says [that] no such statement has yet been made. But is this true? Has it not been said shortly before that doing injustice, acting unjustly is under no circumstances good or noble? You only, I think, have to look at 48b8 to 10 to see that the well, nobly, and just is the same. Does this remain or does it not remain? But you see the involuntary is not completely dropped. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Or have all those former conclusions of ours been overturned in these few days, and have we old men, seriously conversing with each other, failed all along to see that we were no better than children? Or is not—" (49a6-49b1)

LS: Note the strong rhetorical appeal of this passage. "For a very long time, since decades, we have always agreed, and now when we are old, in this very short time now." Since Socrates has been condemned, and when they are old they behave like little children who[56] don't take seriously the results of their long conversations. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: what we used to say most certainly true, whether the world [the many—Mr. R] agree or not? And whether we must endure still more grievous sufferings than these, or lighter ones, is not wrongdoing inevitably an evil and a disgrace to the wrongdoer? Do we believe this or not?
> *Crito*: We do. (49b 1-49b 7)

LS: So[57] the key point here: that the man who acts unjustly harms himself and disgraces himself. And then the first part is decisive: he harms himself, i.e., he is a great fool. If he[58] knew what he was doing, he would not do it. He[59] acts unjustly because he does not know. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Then we ought not to do wrong at all.
> *Crito*: Why, no.
> *Soc*: And we ought not even to requite wrong with wrong, as the many think,[xv] since we must not do wrong at all.
> *Crito*: Apparently not. (49b 8-49c 1)

LS: So now here he goes a step further. Since acting unjustly or doing wrong is bad and hence base, we must of course not pay back an unjust action by acting unjustly on our part. That's, I think, a necessary consequence. *Antadikein*, to act against another man unjustly, is only a special case of acting unjustly in general. Yes?

Mr. Bruell: Isn't [it] the case[60] [that] the anger of a man would make him do something if he is wronged to revenge himself, even though that revenge would be harmful to him, even though it would hurt him[61]?

LS: Well, is this not then a case of temporary blindness, i.e., ignorance?

Mr. Bruell: I would say it. But I was just wondering[62] if that is truly a phenomenon, if that truly happens, that a man willingly hurts himself in a sense, in order to—

LS: Ya, does he do it willingly if he is blinded by passion? That would be a question, whether it is he who does it or something in him which is not his true self.[63] I do not say that Socrates's assertion is crystal clear, but it has some plausibility, considerable plausibility. Good. Now let us see what he says in the sequel, where he makes some progress. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Well, Crito, ought one to do evil or not?" (49c 1-49c 2)

LS: Now, "evil" must here be understood in an amoral sense: "inflict evil on others," ya? That's not the same[64] [as] wronging; wronging has the moral judgment [of] acting unjustly. Here it is only inflicting harm, inflicting evil. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "[Well, Crito], ought one to do ill[xvi] or not?"
> *Crito*: "Certainly not, Socrates."
> *Soc*: "Well, then, is it right to requite ill with ill, as the world says it is, or not right?"
> *Crito*: "Not right, certainly." (49c 1-49c 4)

LS: "Not right at all," yes.

[xv] In original: "as the world thinks"
[xvi] In original: "evil," as in the case throughout this passage.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "For doing ill[xvii] to people is the same thing as wronging them."
> *Crito*: "That is true." (49c 5-49c 6)

LS: Ya. Now, here he[65] makes it a bit clearer what he means. Hitherto he had spoken of wronging, acting unjustly in general, and the word is understood in a manner by everyone at all times. But nevertheless it[66] was unclear. Now he gives it some specific meaning. He says acting unjustly and inflicting harm on human beings is the same. So we know a bit about what it means to harm a human being, say, to cut off his hand, not to mention other lighter or severer harmings. Ya, but still[67] it's nevertheless an identification which is striking. Is it true that acting unjustly is identical with inflicting harm on human beings? Yes?

Student: Not always. Harming them by punishing them—

LS: Well, then you do not harm them. You harm their body and improve their soul at the same time. That's an easy case. [Laughter] Yes?

Mr. Bolotin: Crito doesn't seem to think it was true because his principle[68] of justice was to do what your enemies don't want.

LS: No, not quite. That is more difficult. But something very simple. Can you identify acting unjustly with inflicting harm on human beings? I'm not speaking now of our dumb friends, which are omitted here, although[69] one should also not inflict harm on dogs, and cats, rats, and mice, [which] are in a somewhat different— [laughter]. I do not want to go into this long question, but there is something much more obvious.

Student: Willingly, you know, voluntarily.

LS: No, that has been dropped,[70] which doesn't mean it has been forgotten.

Mr. Reinken: A small island with two tribes, both of which need all the land on the island to live at all.

LS: Yes, we will come to this question of war, by all means. But something much more obvious for readers of the *Apology*. Yes?

Student: There are gods that—

LS: Exactly. So in other words, impiety[71] is not a part of injustice. Now this can be defended easily by simply saying: Well, these are two different virtues; justice here, piety there. But this is not quite so simple because according to an equally common view piety is a subdivision of justice. I mention this[72], but[73] it is surely noteworthy that this is the case. You see also that

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[xvii] In original: "evil"

Socrates[74] states it only negatively. He does not say that acting justly means benefiting human beings. That's important. Yes?

Student: Is it too early to bring up the problem of war and the fact that Socrates himself was a solider and fought, which made it—

LS: I believe it would be wiser to postpone it until we come to that question. But it is most relevant, no question. Yes?

Student: Do you want to just explain that relationship of impiety and acting unjustly to—[75]

LS: No, well according to a very common view[76] which you find, for example, in the *Euthyphron* and in other places, justice means (how shall I say?), say, doing one's duty. And that consists obviously of two parts: doing one's duty towards the gods, piety; and doing one's duty toward human beings, justice in the narrower sense. But you can save Socrates from any embarrassment by simply saying he means here only justice in the narrower sense and of course makes allowance for piety and . . . . Yes?

Student: What about the case where one suffers injustice by choice? In other words, he had the choice of either doing justice or suffering, so according to Socratic dictum he suffers injustice. Is he harming himself, annoyingly?

LS: Give a concrete example.

Student: Well, if someone says: Kill him or you will be killed, you then choose to be killed.

LS: Ya. No, because[77] only his body will suffer and not his soul. I mean, he—

Student: But you would only harm the other person's body. [Laughter]

LS: Ya, that is true. That is true, you may harm the other man, ya, but that is true. That leads to—in other words, if you kill him[78] you will prevent him from corrupting his soul by preventing him from committing a crime. That's quite true. That's one of the many difficulties[79] which we have to face sooner or later, but which are somehow swept under the rug for the time being. [Laughter] Yes. Now let us read the next sentence.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Then we ought neither to requite wrong with wrong nor to do harm to anyone, no matter what he may have done to us." (49c7-49c9)

LS: Yes, this is even still stronger. One cannot injure any human being whatever, even [if] that human being may inflict [harm] on oneself. For example, one may not hit a slave who is killing one's own aged father would be an example, and war, naturally. And one could say provisionally: Well, in a just war you do not hurt anybody even if you kill these many enemy soldiers, because you only correct an unjust enemy. But whether that is sufficient we will see later.[80] This comes up quite naturally. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And be careful, Crito that you do not, in agreeing to this, agree to something you do not believe—" (49c9-49d 2)

LS: Or more literally, "against your opinion." Ya?

Mr. Reinken: "for I know that there are few who believe or ever will believe this" (49d 2-49d3)

LS: You see. That is a very rare opinion. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Now those who believe this, and those who do not have no common ground of discussion, but—" (49d3-49d5)

LS: "Deliberation" would be[81] better. "Have no common deliberation." Ya.

Mr. Reinken: "deliberations[xviii], but they must necessarily, in view of their opinions, despise one another." (49d 5-49d 6)

LS: All right,[82] that is the cleavage among men: those who believe in absolute nonresistance and those who do not believe in it. But the interesting point[83] here [is] this. This is no longer the cleavage or the gulf between the knowers and the non-knowers. This cleavage[84] to which Socrates refers here is not the cleavage[85] between philosophers and non-philosophers, but it somehow reflects that cleavage, namely, those who hold that the unexamined life is not worth living and those who hold that[86] the unexamined life is worth living also have no common ground of deliberation in the last resort. Which doesn't mean that they may have common ground of deliberation when they deliberate which sort of ties they should buy and so on, but only in very important questions. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Do you therefore consider very carefully whether you agree and share in this opinion, and let us take as the starting point of our discussion the assumption that it is never right to do harm or to requite harm with harm,[xix] or when we suffer harm to defend ourselves by doing harm in return.[xx] Or do you disagree or refuse your assent to this starting point?" (49d 7-49e 1)

LS: Ya. Now, hitherto it has been left wholly undetermined what is[87] just and good, or bad. Now one example is given. No, I'm sorry. I made a mistake.[88] Crito accepts this starting point, I'm sorry, without any contradiction. And thereupon Socrates adds a qualification. One may defend oneself, as you see here. One may defend oneself. Hitherto it seemed that under no circumstances may you repel force by force, which is ordinarily regarded as a natural right. But[89] now he says: You may defend yourself. But you may not do it by inflicting evil on the other one, which leads then to the interesting case[90] which Locke once discussed when the question came up whether one may execute a tyrannical king. And one of these writers of his time, I believe it

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[xviii] In original: "discussion"
[xix] In original: "do wrong or to requite wrong with wrong"
[xx] In original: "suffer evil to defend ourselves by doing evil"

was Barclay, had said one must do it with due respect, and that is necessary. And Locke said he has nothing against his qualification, but it is not very relevant[91] whether the executioner does it with respect for his majesty or without respect for him.[xxi] Good. Something of this difficulty seems here to be implied. Now let us go on.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Or do you disagree and refuse your assent to this starting point? For I have long held this belief and I hold it yet, but if you have reached any other conclusion, speak and explain it to me if you still hold to our former opinion hear the next point.
> *Crito*: I do hold— (49d12-49e5)

LS: Now, the next point. Now Socrates makes again a transition[92]. We should have a list where we note the steps of the argument, a new point comes in. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Crito*: I do hold to it and I agree with you; so go on.
> *Soc*: Now the next thing I say, or rather ask, is this: "ought a man to do what he has agreed to do, provided it is right, or may he violate his agreements?"
> *Crito*: He ought to do it. (49e 5-49e 9)

LS: Now, yes. Now, and from this, how does he go on next?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Then consider whether, if we go away—" (49e10)

LS: No,[93] "from these things"—namely, the premises now started—"let us draw the conclusions." Hitherto it had been left wholly undetermined what is just or good, and somehow Socrates appealed to our general awareness or opinion of what is good and just. Now, one example is given: it is unjust not to keep one's agreements, provided of course they are just in the first place. But still[94] this case is singled out because of its special importance. Now Burnet has here a note[95]. "Socrates is always represented," he says, "as making this reservation. So in the First Book of the *Republic* he insists that it is not right to give back a sword to a friend if he has gone mad when he asks [for] it back, or to tell the truth to a friend in such a state." (Burnet, 199) I suppose most of you know this discussion. Ya,[96] but surely Socrates does not make the unqualified statement here. Socrates only asks the question, as you will see. That is of importance. Socrates asks a question;[97] he explicitly says: I rather raise a question. And now what are the conclusions? Socrates says: Watch, look out, consider on the basis of these things, meaning, of these two premises which are: First, one must not injure any human being under any circumstances; and second, one must keep one's just agreements with someone—two premises from which the conclusion will be drawn in the sequel. Now read this, please.

[xxi] Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chapter 19, especially sections 232-239.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Then consider from these, whether,[xxii] if we go away from here without the consent of the city,[xxiii] we are doing harm to the very ones to whom we least ought to do harm, or not, and whether we are abiding by what we agreed was right, or not." (49e10-50a4)

LS: Ya. So would Socrates and Crito, by escaping from prison, injure human beings? Would they keep their agreements if they did that? The difference between Socrates and Crito, as you see, is wholly irrelevant for deciding the issue. It is the act of Socrates and Crito. And you must also see when he says: Would we harm those whom one should harm least? that injuring some human beings is graver than injuring others. And this leads then to a very interesting casuistry. At the top, are people one must— it is extremely grave, and at the bottom is where it is of very little gravity, which introduces an element of relativity into this seemingly absolute argument. And now we hear what Crito has to say to this.

Mr. Reinken: *Crito*: "I cannot answer your question, Socrates, for I do not understand." (50a 4-50a 5)

LS: [98]So what does this mean, that Crito does not understand Socrates's question? This is the only case of this kind in the *Crito*, the dialogue. It is inconceivable to Crito that in escaping from prison Socrates could injure any human being or break any agreement. Well, I believe we have some difficulties to see the difficulty, because[99] most of us have read the *Crito* before and[100] we can't understand how anyone cannot understand this very simple argument. It is not as simple, as we have partly seen. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "Consider it in this way. If, as I was on the point of running away (or whatever it should be called)—" (50a5-50a7)

LS: "We." We, not "I."

Mr. Reinken: "we were on the point of running away (or whatever it should be called), the laws and the—" (50a 5-50b1)

LS: Now let us stop here. "We." Does Socrates mean that Crito too would have to leave Athens if Socrates is running away? And[101] does he remind Crito of this most difficult implication? We do not know. Now begin again with this sentence.

Mr. Reinken: "If, as we were[xxiv] on the point of running away (or whatever it should be called), the laws of[xxv] the commonwealth should come to me and ask, 'Tell me, Socrates, what have you in mind to do? Are you not intending by this thing you are trying to do, to destroy us, the laws, and the entire city[xxvi], so far as in you lies?'" (50a5-50b2)

[xxii] In original: "Then consider whether"
[xxiii] In original: "the state"
[xxiv] In original: "I was"
[xxv] In original: "and"
[xxvi] In original: "state"

LS: Now let us stop here. Now[102] here begins the famous *prosōpopoiia*, in Greek—in literal translation, personification of the laws—which is decisive for the rest of the argument. And we will soon see why this is the case. Socrates identifies here the laws and the commonwealth, as he[xxvii] translates quite well: literally, "the common of the city." And you see: "tell me"—that is the singular; that is of course the commonwealth. And then later he says "us"—that is of course the laws. So he treats the city and the laws as identical. But nevertheless, in the sequel the emphasis is altogether on the laws rather than the city. There are some remarks of Burnet which are of some interest: "*to koinon tēs poleōs*[xxviii], 'the State', 'the Commonwealth.'" Ya, but the state and the commonwealth are very different concepts. "The phrase marks at least the beginning of the idea that the State as such was a juristic personality or corporation, a view not as a rule clearly grasped by the Athenians or the Greeks generally." (Burnet 1964, 280) Well, one would only have to try to translate "the juristic personality" into Greek to see that there is no place for that notion. What that is very hard to say.[103] Well, we all know what they mean. A juristic personality is a person who can act; for example, own property. A city can own property. A city can do all other kinds of acts[104] of legal validity or invalidity of legal relevance. And that makes it a juristic personality as distinguished from a merely natural personality like any of us. But that would be very hard, to express the thought in Greek and to find its classical Greek equivalent. And more important is the following observation which Burnet makes here in this context: "the personification of the Laws (who are of course to be pictured as august male figures)," because word *nomos* is masculine in Greek. (Burnet 1964, 279) Yes, that is indeed very interesting.[105] Of what does it remind us when we see here these august male figures at the end of the dialogue? Yes?

Mr. Bruell: The woman at the beginning.

LS: Exactly[106]. It begins with the woman at the beginning[107], who appears [to] Socrates in a dream, and it ends, then—in other words,[108] [they] are not gods, but they are like gods, both. Yes. Now in the meantime I reminded myself of a passage which I had completely forgotten in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Book 12, chapter 1, paragraph 22 following. Well, here Xenophon tells the famous story of Heracles at the crossroads, written in imitation of a speech made by the famous sophist Prodicus. And in this connection we find also a woman dressed in white, as that woman was at the beginning of the *Crito*. Who was that? Well, I think I [will] just read to you from the translation, which is not very good, Xenophon's remark:

> "When Heracles was passing from boyhood to youth's estate, wherein the young, now becoming their own masters, show whether they will approach life by the path of virtue or the path of vice, he went out into a quiet place, and sat pondering which road to take. And there appeared wo women of great stature making toward him. The one was fair to see and of high bearing; and her limbs were adorned with purity, her eyes with modesty; sober was her figure, and her robe was white. The other was plump and soft, with high feeding. Her face was

[xxvii] Fowler.
[xxviii] Original in Greek letters.

> made up to heighten its natural white and pink, her figure to exaggerate her height. Open-eyed was she; and dressed so as to disclose all her charms."

[Laughter] "'Now she eyed herself; anon she[xxix] looked whether any noticed her; and often stole a glance at her own shadow.'"[xxx] Now who is that white dressed woman? Virtue.[109] I think we should consider the possibility that the woman who appeared to Socrates at the beginning of the *Crito* is Virtue. And then at the end there appear the laws. And this would force us to raise the question: What precisely is the relation between virtue and the laws? Now the laws are of course here the Athenian laws, as appears from the context, and what would be then the question which we would have to address to the Athenian laws even apart from this Xenophonic passage? What question would we have to address to the Athenian laws?

Student: Are they virtuous?

LS: Do they lead to virtue? And if they do not lead to virtue, what would be the consequence of that? Well, they are not very respectable. That is safe to say because that is axiomatic for men like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, that the function of laws is to make men virtuous. And if they don't do it and even do not aim at doing it, then that is a very great defect. And needless to say,[110] that would affect adversely the argument of Socrates in the sequel, although not the action he will undertake in the circumstances. Now where were we? Yes.

Mr. Reinken: Just [at] 50b, almost[111] past the—

LS: No, let us read again. "Tell me, Socrates, what."[112]

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "Tell me, Socrates, what have you in mind to do? Are you not intending by this thing you are trying to do, to destroy us, the laws, and the entire city,[xxxi] so far as in you lies? Or do you think that city[xxxii] can exist and not be overturned, in which the decisions reached by the courts have no force but are made invalid and annulled by private persons?" What shall we say, Crito, in reply to this question and others of the same kind? (50a8-50b7)

LS: You will see immediately or have already seen that Crito is not given an opportunity to reply to this question. Perhaps we are bidden to think of the fact that cities survive what we now call revolutions, what the Greeks called *staseis*, in which it happened quite frequently that prisons were opened, and yet the city survived all right, you know, despite the fact that the decisions of the courts lost their practical validity. At any rate, it is remarkable that Crito is not given an opportunity to reply to this question. Yes.

[xxix] "She" is not in the original.
[xxx] Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, trans. E. C. Marchant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), II. 1.21-II.1.22.
[xxxi] In original: "entire state"
[xxxii] In original: "state"

Mr. Reinken: "For one might say many things, especially if one were an orator, about the destruction of that law which provides that the decisions reached by the courts shall be valid." (50b7-50b11)

LS: You see, this particular law; he[113] is not speaking here of laws in general. He doesn't say here any more that the polis will be destroyed by that, but this particular law. Here is a point in Burnet which I think we should also consider. On the passage at 50b8. "The law (passed after the Amnesty," after the restoration of the democracy, "that the decisions by the courts would—which have been made while the city was ruled democratically[xxxiii], would apply *a fortiori* to judicial decisions[xxxiv]114 decided after the restoration of the democracy.[xxxv]" (Burnet 1964, 281) That may very well be the case, but was Socrates a democrat? That would be the question which we would have to consider here. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: Or shall we say to them, "The city[xxxvi] wronged me and did not judge the case rightly"? Shall we say that, or what?
> *Crito*: That is what we shall say, by Zeus, Socrates. (50b11-50c3)

LS: Ya, now[115] is this not amazing? Did Socrates not make it, I don't say crystal clear, but very clear, that one must not under any circumstances give tit for tat, do wrong to someone who has done one wrong? And Crito had fully agreed with that. And now here in this passage, he restates this rejected opinion. How do we explain it? That is Crito's sole objection to the trend of Socrates's argument, and [it] is much more strongly worded than the parallel in 48a. Yes, you had an answer.

Mr. Schaefer: No, I had a question. [Laughter] Why is this necessarily giving tit for tat? I mean, if this is not really giving harm.

LS: No, the polis[116] hurt us [Mr. S: Yes], wronged us [Mr. S: Yes], and why should we not hit back, hurt her?

Mr. Schaefer: But is this necessarily hurting the polis? Or is it simply saving the polis from doing injustice?

LS: Ya, but[117] Crito doesn't start any argument. The mere fact that the city did injustice to us gives [us] the right to react in this way. I believe there is a very simple reason for that. Injustice had been defined before: doing ["harm to humans"—Mr. Reinken] harm to human beings. Is the polis, or are the laws, human beings? Is the polis—you can say the polis is a multitude of human beings, but to quote again the expression used by Burnet, "a juristic personality" is not, cannot be

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[xxxiii] In original: Greek lettering
[xxxiv] In original: "*dikai*" (in Greek letters)
[xxxv] In original: "after the democracy was restored"
[xxxvi] In original: "state"

identical with a mere multitude but is a peculiar form of unit. Clearly the laws, these august superhuman figures, are no human beings. In other words, the advantage which Socrates derives from the personification, to present the laws as of more than life-size, has also the disadvantage that you may forget the massive, primary fact that the laws are made by human beings for human beings. You see, that is a difficulty which follows from this personification. But someone here raised his hand or her hand.[118]

Student: You've already answered my question. I was going to ask about the laws being for human being.

LS: Ya, well, this is of course no longer visible when the laws are in this way personified. Good. Although the personification makes of course some sense; otherwise one would have to have recourse to the passage in 49d where Socrates spoke of the fact that there is no common ground between those who say you can hit back if hurt and those who deny that. You remember that passage? Which would be very bad for Crito[119] if there would be no common deliberation—and then there could be no *Crito*, I mean no dialogue *Crito*. So that is less attractive, I believe. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "What then if the laws should say, 'Socrates, is this the agreement you made with us, or did you agree to abide by the verdicts pronounced by the city[xxxvii]?' Now if I were surprised by what they said, perhaps they would continue—" (50c3-50c7)

LS: Now let us stop here. It is not sufficient to say that Socrates, as far as in him lies, would destroy the city by running away. It is necessary that the law commanding respect for the judicial decision be based on an agreement between the laws and Socrates. Now, what that means—an addition that is necessary. What this means we must see in the sequel. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'Don't be surprised at what we say, Socrates, but answer, since you are in the habit of employing the method of question and answer.'" (50c7-50c10)

LS: Ya. Now, well, the "method" is of course a wholly gratuitous addition. "Since you are accustomed to use[120] questioning and answering." The laws, you see, do not simply directly reply to the objection that there was no such agreement ever between Socrates and the laws regarding the sanctity of the judicial decisions. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "Come, what fault do you find with us and the city[xxxviii], that you are trying to destroy us? In the first place, did we not bring you forth? Is it not through us that your father married your mother and begat you? Now tell us, have you any fault to find with those of us who are the laws of marriage?"
> "I find no fault," I should say. (50c10-50d6)

[xxxvii] In original: "state
[xxxviii] In original: "state"

LS: Ya, let us stop here. So the laws presuppose[121]—but only presuppose, that has never been proven—that trying to escape is trying to destroy the laws and the city altogether. But here this first argument which they make now raises of course a question. That Socrates owed his respectability to the fact that he was not born out of wedlock is undeniable, because in former times people took this quite seriously, as you know. But nevertheless, the laws say much more than that: the laws say that they generated Socrates, whereas in fact who generated Socrates?

Student: His mother and father.

LS: Yes[122], and[123] this generation of men by men is still called a natural phenomenon, ya? Natural phenomenon. Now here, if the laws claim that they have generated Socrates, the difference between nature and law is abolished, tacitly and with very great consequences. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "Or with those that have to do with the nurture of the child after he is born and with his education which you, like others, received? Did those of us who are assigned to these matters not give good directions when we told your father to educate you in music and gymnastics?" "You did," I should say. (50d 6-50e1)

LS: [124]Now there are two questions here, and only the second one is answered. The highest part of Socrates's education, of course, is not due to the laws—I mean this general education which every or almost every Athenian child got. That might be due to the laws, but to whom is Socrates's higher education, which[125] was much more valuable to him than music and gymnastics as demanded by law, to whom was that due?

Student: The gods?

LS: Yes. The oracle in Delphi, you can say; if you want to you can say that.[126] But on the other hand you have to add immediately that the oracle in Delphi was only a response to Chaerephon's question; surely it was not due to the city of Athens. Now this question is discussed in the *Republic* in 520b. We will perhaps read that if I have that. Well, I [will] simply read you the translation. The discussion is that—Socrates says: "we shall not be wronging the philosophers who arise among us," by demanding from them political acts, service "but that we can justify our action when we constrain them to take charge of the other citizens and be their guardians. For we will say to them that it is natural that men of similar quality who spring up in other cities," i.e., not the perfect city of the *Republic*, "should not share in the labours there. For they grow up spontaneously from no volition of the government in the several cities[xxxix], and it is justice that the self-grown, indebted to none for its breeding, should not be zealous either to pay to anyone the price of its nurture."[xl] Socrates, in other words, owes the best in him not to any action of the city of Athens or of the laws of Athens, however good the elementary instruction provided by the city of Athens may have been. Now let us go on in 50e, where we were.

[xxxix] In Loeb edition: "states"

[xl] *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 520a8-520b8.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'Well then, when you were born and nurtured and educated, could you say to begin with that you were not our offspring and our slave, you yourself and your ancestors?'" (50e1-50e5)

LS: Ya, so the laws generated not only that individual Socrates, they generated all Athenians from the very beginning, i.e., the *nomoi* generated Athens. Hence every Athenian belongs all together, body and soul, to the laws—is their slave. I think from now on we understand somewhat better why there was no reference in 50c to the principle that one must not do a wrong in return to any human being: for the reason that we have to deal only with a special case of wronging, namely, wronging in response to one's superiors, to one's masters. That is the nerve of the argument now. You do not have to go into the general question [of] whether you[127] may not wrong any human beings in any circumstances. But only whether you may not wrong any of your superiors or masters. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "And if this is so, do you think right as between you and us rests on a basis of equality, so that whatever we undertake to do to you it is right for you to retaliate? There was no such equality of right between you and your father or your master, if you had one, so that whatever treatment you received you might return it, answering them if you were reviled, or striking back if you were struck, and the like; and do you think that it will be proper for you to act so toward your country and the laws, so that if we undertake to destroy you, thinking it is right, you will undertake in return to destroy us laws and your country, so far as you are able, and will say that in doing this you are doing right, you [who] really care for virtue?" (50e5-51a7)

LS: Ya,[128] with the implication, "you who talk all the time about your caring for virtue." Now in order to understand that a bit better, the word "country" is in Greek *patris*, which means fatherland, so the transition from the father to the fatherland is quite obvious. There is no equality whatever between the laws of the city, the fatherland, and the individual. Unqualified obedience is the only thing which one has to do, at least unqualified passive obedience. If your father strikes you, insults you, or does anything, or blinds you—for that matter, kills you, you are not permitted to do anything against him. And hence of course no possibility whatever to rebel or to protest against judicial decisions legally made. Because if they are illegally made here they are not backed by the laws, but if they are legally made then nothing can be done.

Now,[129] we [will] read the sequel next time. The point which Socrates is going to make in the sequel is this: not only passive obedience, meaning that you have to suffer, but also active obedience. You have to do anything the laws or the city tells you to do.[130] There is one alternative, of course, pointed out by Socrates. You[131] are entitled to persuade the city to desist from its unjust course. But if you fail in your persuasion, in your attempt at persuasion, what do you have to do? You have to obey. So unqualified active and passive obedience: this is the message of the laws. Whether this is Plato or Socrates's serious and final suggestion regarding this very grave issue, that is a question[132] which we will have to consider, of course. But usually when one discusses this in the light of the *Republic* or the *Laws*, you will get the answer: Well[133]

these words were written by Plato a decade or decades later and he changed his mind. And therefore we have to consider especially the *Apology*, where everyone agrees that it belongs together in time as well[134] as in any other respect with the *Crito*. Now what[135] does the *Apology* say? Does Socrates teach there [that] one must obey the city unconditionally?

Student: He says that men, could they order him to desist philosophizing, he won't.

LS: I see. So at least one example is perfectly sufficient to destroy the rule. If the city could—of course if it had the power somehow to forbid philosophizing, and Socrates would not obey the polis then. Whether this is the only case where Socrates would not obey the laws is a long question. And it would apply of course to such interesting cases as wars, where one would have to make a distinction, however, between what kinds of wars. And we will take this up next time.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "Yes? Yes, the exam, yes. Well, since I too have been young once I understand your trepidations. Well, it will be very simple. This course has sixteen meetings in an eight-week quarter, and so on the seventeenth meeting (today we have the twelfth, you can easily figure out with the help of a calendar), we all will meet in this room at 3:30 and a question will be—maybe two questions will be dictated to you and you have to reply to them until 5 o'clock. And there will probably be a proctor."

[2] Deleted "This—."

[3] Changed from "since a deed is a poetic."

[4] Deleted "and."

[5] Deleted "the."

[6] Deleted "Yes?"

[7] Deleted "is not—."

[8] Deleted "*Days and*—."

[9] Deleted "he—."

[11] Deleted "b,."

[12] Deleted "the—."

[13] Deleted "Now—."

[14] Deleted "of—."

[15] Deleted "yeah."

[16] Deleted "is—."

[17] Deleted "to—."

[18] Deleted "transition from—of the preceding—transition—."

[19] Deleted "the—the—that."

[20] Deleted "and."

[21] Deleted "is."

[22] Deleted "the—."

[23] Deleted "is—."

[24] Deleted “Be—.”

[25] Deleted “Where—.”

[26] Deleted “great—.”

[27] Deleted “word—.”

[28] Deleted “this would—.”

[29] Deleted “would—.”

[30] Deleted “in—.”

[31] Deleted “there—here—.”

[32] Deleted “he—.”

[33] Deleted “we—.”

[34] Deleted “he says in both cases—.”

[35] Deleted “that I must not go—.”

[36] Deleted “yeah?”

[37] Deleted “is—.”

[38] Deleted “The starting—.”

[39] Deleted “that Socrates—.”

[40] Deleted “on.”

[41] Deleted “Yes?”

[42] Deleted “this is—.”

[43] Deleted “Socrates—.”

[44] Deleted “of.”

[45] Deleted “make—train—.”

[46] Moved “simply.”

[47] Deleted “this—.”

[48] Deleted “the word—.”

[49] Deleted “No one chooses knowing—as.”

[50] Changed from “and nevertheless smoke.”

[51] Deleted “it this—we—.”

[52] Deleted “of the problem—.”

[53] Deleted “yeah? Is—is—.”

[54] Deleted “in.”

[55] Deleted “R: Not—not in—not in the—
LS: Read Fowler’s note.”

[56] Deleted “have—.”

[57] Deleted “you know.”

[58] Deleted “well, well—.”

[59] Deleted “does he—he—he.”

[60] Deleted “of a—a particular—.”

[61] Deleted “would it?”

[62] Deleted “if that—that phenomenon—.”

[63] Deleted “Plato—.”

[64] Deleted “like.”

[65] Deleted “makes a claim—.”

[66] Deleted “is—.”

[67] Deleted “it is not—.”

[68] Deleted “LS: Pardon?

Bolotin: Crito—Crito didn’t seem to think it was true because his principle.”

[69] Deleted “they should—.”

[70] Deleted “but—.”

[71] Deleted “is—does—.”

[72] Deleted “only—.”

[73] Deleted “it—it is no longer—.”

[74] Deleted “does—says—is—.”

[75] Deleted “can—you know—I didn’t—.”

[76] Deleted “of—of.”

[77] Deleted “he—.”

[78] Deleted “his soul will—.”

[79] Deleted “we have—.”

[80] Deleted “I had—we have—.”

[81] Deleted “one—the more—.”

[82] Deleted “let us here…So this….”

[83] Moved “is.”

[84] Deleted “of—.”

[85] Deleted “among—.”

[86] Deleted “that—simultaneous—.”

[87] Deleted “just and unjust—and.”

[88] Deleted “I came—here, no.”

[89] Deleted “here he—.”

[90] Deleted “if—.”

[91] Deleted “once you—you know, whether you—.”

[92] Deleted “to—not—.”

[93] Deleted “yeah. Well—city—.”

[94] Deleted “this is singled out.”

[95] Deleted “which—.”

[96] Deleted “but one can only—.”

[97] Deleted “he does not—.”

[98] Deleted “Yeah.”

[99] Deleted “we—.”

[100] Deleted “then we make it—.”

[101] Deleted “is—.”

[102] Deleted “this—.”

[103] Deleted “A jury—.”

[104] Deleted “and that—.”

[105] Deleted “They are—.”

[106] Deleted “it ends with the woman—.”

[107] Deleted “you know?”

[108] Deleted “there.”

[109] Deleted “And it is—.”

[110] Deleted “that”

[111] Deleted “at—.”

[112] Deleted “yeah.”

[113] Deleted “here is—.”

[114] The original reads “δικαι.”

[115] Deleted “that’s—.”

[116] Deleted “hit—.”

[117] Deleted “this—no—but.”

[118] Deleted “You.

A: You already answered that question.

LS: Pardon?”

[119] Deleted “if he were reduced—.”

[120] Deleted “the—ask the.”

[121] Deleted “that try—.”

[122] Deleted “So, but to—what does it—.”

[123] Deleted “that.”

[124] Deleted “Good.”

[125] Deleted “is much more—.”

[126] Deleted “And—.”

[127] Deleted “have—.”

[128] Deleted “who—.”

[129] Deleted “in—.”

[130] Deleted “You have—.”

[131] Deleted “mate—you.”

[132] Deleted “of—we—.”

[133] Deleted “‘this was written by Plato—.’”

[134] Deleted “in—.”

[135] Deleted “exact—what.”

Leo Strauss: Now let us first summarize what we have discussed last time. What are Socrates's arguments against Crito? First, one must obey the expert rather than the many regarding the good, noble, and just things, if there is such an expert. But is there such an expert? Now if there is no such expert[1] the consequence would be, at least I would be so bold as to draw it now, one must obey the laws. But are not the laws the opinions of the multitude? And is[2] the possibility of the judgment of the expert not a threat to the authority of the laws? Therefore Socrates's next step: he drops the consideration of the experts and asserts that one must not wrong anyone in any circumstance. That is to say, one must not inflict harm on anyone in any circumstances, regardless of what the other fellow has done to you first. So here we have forgotten about the experts but still the expert problem remains, for who is competent to determine what is and is not harming? Socrates secondly asserts that one must fill one's agreements, provided they are just. Again, who is competent to determine what is just? The questions are relatively easy[3] once you assume the validity of the laws. But this problem, this validity is questioned by this vague possibility of a supralegal understanding.

The next step in Socrates's argument is the personification of the city and the laws. Personification means literally making them persons, but not in any metaphysical sense of the word, but making them characters, as in a play; *prosōpa* in Greek. As Aristophanes, for example, makes [the] *demos* an individual—you know, an oldish, rather fat, lazy fellow, good-natured, but not very bright. Or war, *polemos*, or *eirēnē*, peace, or *aischros*, *kratos*, and *bia*, force and violence. Now we have been[4] reminded by Burnet of the modern notion of a juridical personality, which is something very different from a personification; for example, like a corporation which is a juridical personality and so on.

Now I thought we should remind ourselves for one moment of the most important statement regarding juridical personality, which is not to be found in any recondite legal text but in Hobbes, especially in the *Leviathan*. I'll read to you the passage, chapter 17: "the commonwealth . . . (to define it) is one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he," namely, the commonwealth, "may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defense."[i] This is the first definition of the political community, of the commonwealth, of the state, in which the state is defined as a person. Now, what does Hobbes mean when he calls the commonwealth a person? As is indicated in the wording of this definition and developed at some length in the whole chapter, the meaning is that the individual is completely absorbed into the commonwealth. What the commonwealth does to me (regardless of what it does), I do to myself; my will has been completely absorbed by the social contract into the will of the commonwealth. And now there is an old legal rule, *volenti non fit iniuria*: to him who wills no wrong is done. And therefore of course[5] the state can do you no wrong because you have authorized it in advance to do to you whatever it thinks expedient. Now the rationale of the Hobbean notion of the state as a person[6], of the complete absorption of the individual by society, is the assumption that death is the greatest evil, and therefore anarchy, civil war, or anything like it must be avoided by all means. Therefore there must [be] law and order at every cost and at

[i] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 17.

every price. Therefore there must be no possibility for the individual to appeal from the commonwealth, from its laws to higher laws. You know, this is an anarchic element, necessarily. Well, but Hobbes gets into great troubles. He has made this beautiful construction of the Leviathan, which has absorbed the will of everyone because everyone wants to avoid violent death—at least if he is in his senses; that is a minor difficulty. And so what you have to do is to obey the laws as Socrates demands, whatever they command you to do. But what is the trouble into which Hobbes comes, precisely because his starting point is that death is the greatest evil? Yes?

Student: He says that you can't live without it.

LS: Yes. Yes, very simply. Now, what does Hobbes say on the subject?

Student: Well, you can disobey the state.

LS: Yes, you entered society, political society, in order to protect yourself against dying and therefore, if that civil society turns against you, endangers your life, you are perfectly entitled to disobey. And Hobbes is consistent enough to say that even if you are a justly condemned murderer, let us say, you have the right, the natural right to kill the guards, get out of jail, kill everyone, in order only to save dear life, which is of course not a very good solution. Now[7] Hobbes has very much to do with the subject we are discussing because he developed his whole position, and that means by implication also the positions of men like Locke and Rousseau later, in opposition to Socrates's "quote anarchism," the anarchism being the fact that according to Socrates and his followers, Plato and Aristotle and so on, it is possible to appeal from the positive law to something like natural right. And there is no possibility of finding an elegant and simple solution to this difficulty because the question is always: Who is competent to judge? There are no legally definable criteria; or if there are, they are as much positive law as anything else and are therefore objectionable. The simple sign and the most obvious sign of the opposition[8] between Hobbes and the whole tradition is that from Hobbes' point of view it is impossible to make a distinction between king and tyrant, because[9] a king whom you do not like, that's a tyrant. That is what Hobbes says; there is no objective distinction.

Now what then does Socrates mean by his seemingly identical statement in the *Crito*, the Socrates who was certainly not a Hobbist? Now the personification of the laws is a poetic device and not a legal concept, this much is clear. And we have to compare the laws at the end with the woman at the beginning of the *Crito*. And we may perhaps say that since the woman is not described as in any way repulsive, she might be understood as an object of desire. And surely nothing of this kind could be said of the *nomoi* at the end, the laws at the end [of the dialogue]. The personification raises the laws high above man[10] and this leads to the consequence that one cannot be under any obligation not to wrong the laws. That would be as absurd as to say you can wrong the gods. Or more simply stated, to wrong someone was said to do harm to human beings; the laws, as they appear at the end of the *Crito*, are surely not human beings. Or, one cannot wrong them, cannot harm them because they are so high above us. The laws here take the place of the gods, and one would have to wonder why they take the place of the gods. Well, the argument in favor of the absoluteness of the laws is based on the [11]the relation between the child and the parents, especially the father. Just as you have to obey your father and not to hit him

back[12] when he hits you, not to insult him after he has insulted you, the same applies *a fortiori* to 274
the fatherland, as you may recall. And why does Socrates replace then the laws by the gods? I would say, well, the most famous of the gods, the highest god, Zeus, was not a model son. He bound his father, you know, and acted against him, and this is one good reason why one should not speak very much about Zeus here. At any rate, the laws make sure that Socrates approves of certain Athenian laws, namely, the laws regarding marriage and regarding elementary education. Socrates therefore must be grateful for the benefits which accrue to him by virtue of those laws. That is perfectly sensible, but then they suddenly jump at the conclusion that Socrates is altogether their slave. In other words, if you have received some respectable benefits from someone else, be they even the laws, this is not a reason for being the slave of that someone else. How can Socrates make that jump? And in order to see how this is possible, we shall turn to the sequel where we left off last time and that was 51a 7. Now let me see, is this correct?[13]

Mr. Reinken: Yes, [our] page 179[14].

LS: Now read very slowly, please.

Mr. Reinken:

> Or is your wisdom such that you do not see that your fatherland[ii] is more precious and more to be revered and is holier and in higher esteem among the gods and among men of understanding than your mother and your father and all your ancestors, and that you ought to show to her more reverence and obedience and humility when she is angry than to your father, and ought either to convince her by persuasion or to do whatever she commands, and to suffer, if she commands you to suffer, in silence, and if she orders you to be scourged or imprisoned or if she leads you to war to be wounded or slain, her will is to be done, and this is right, and you must not give way or draw back or leave your post, but in war and in court and everywhere, you must do whatever the city[iii], your fatherland[iv], commands— (51a8-51c1)

LS: No, no: "the city and the fatherland."[15]

Mr. Reinken: And "'your fatherland, command, or must show them[v] by persuasion what is really right—'" (51c1-51c 2)

LS: "What is by nature right."

Mr. Reinken:

> "right by nature,[vi] but that it is impious to use violence against either your father or your mother, and much more impious to use it against your fatherland?" What shall we reply to this, Crito, that the laws speak the truth, or not?"

[ii] In original: "country"
[iii] In original: "state"
[iv] In original: "country"
[v] In original: "her"
[vi] In original: "really right"

Crito: "I think they do." (51c2-51c6)

LS: Now let us stop here. So Socrates had said before that there is a duty of unqualified obedience, at least unqualified passive obedience. Now he goes beyond that and makes it clear beyond a shadow of doubt that [it is] man's duty to pay unqualified active obedience as well, whatever the polis commands you if you cannot persuade the polis of the injustice of its commands. And the injustice would mean of course of the fact that its commands are intrinsically unjust, by nature unjust. This is a great question of the difference between positive law and natural right. You know, or may know, that something the city [is] commanding you to do is by nature wrong, and you oppose that to the unjust command of the city, and you try to persuade the city. But if you fail to do so, then you have to obey. Well, let us—there is a famous case of Mytilene told in Thucydides' history, where the Athenians decided under the leadership of Cleon to destroy the city because it had rebelled against Athens, to kill all men and to sell all women into slavery. An atrocious decision. According to what Socrates says here, Socrates would have to go there and participate in the killing and enslaving. Well, in this particular case, the Athenian *demos* reconsidered the case and then by some piece of good luck, a day or two later they rescinded their decision and by the very greatest efforts of some Athenian sailors, the second ship which brought the good news arrived in time, but it was touch and go. But this is a wonderful accident. But the main point which Socrates makes is in such a case there is no possibility except to obey the city.

Now there are more questions than that. You also have seen that the issue is now completely settled to Crito's satisfaction. One must obey the laws, and then Socrates can of course not escape from prison. As for the difficulty, I read to you one passage from the beginning of the Fifth Book of the *Laws*.

> Let everyone who has just heard the ordinances concerning gods and dear ancestors [which includes of course the parents—LS] now give ear. Of all a man's own belongings, the most divine is his soul, since it is most his own. A man's own belongings are invariably twofold: the stronger and better are the ruling elements, the weaker and worse those that serve; wherefore of one's own belongings one must honour those that rule above those that serve. Thus it is that in charging men to honour their own souls next after the gods who rule and the secondary divinities, I am giving a right injunction[vii] [and so on—LS].

Did you notice anything? It is hard, when it is only read once. Yes?

Student: The first time he said honor the souls highest, and the second time he said[16] honor the souls second after the god.

LS: No,[17] he alluded to it at the very beginning. And what he had said before regarding honoring the gods and the ancestors—let us say, gods and parents. And now he speaks of the soul: he says we must honor first the gods and then the soul. Did you notice that?

[vii] *Laws* 726-727a. The Athenian Stranger is the speaker. Strauss reads from the Loeb Classical Library edition, translated by R. G. Bury.

Mr. Wolfowitz: And in the beginning, he said the most divine thing—doesn't he say the most divine is the soul?

LS: In us.

Mr. Wolfowitz: In us.

LS: So now the problem—what did you want to say?

Mr. Reinken: But it comes in ahead of the parents, you said.

LS: Ya. No,[18] that is not clear; it is indicated as a problem. That the gods occupy the top place is not questioned, but then the question is: Who comes first in case of conflict, the parents or the soul? This is here only implicitly stated as a question, and that question is underlying the whole *Crito*. Now we—and why does it not become an explicit question in the *Crito*? We already know the fact: the abstraction from the soul in the *Crito*. In passages where it was natural to speak of the soul and inevitable to speak of the soul, Socrates or Plato deliberately avoids the word soul and uses only paraphrasic expressions in order to draw our attention to this disregard of the soul. Once you consider the soul, you cannot accept the argument of the *Crito*. And that is a point which we know also from the *Apology*, where Socrates makes one key qualification against the claim of the laws: if the laws would forbid him to philosophize, he would not obey the laws. This is the most manifest contradiction between what is explicitly said in the *Apology* and what is explicitly said in the *Crito*. According to the *Apology*, Socrates makes a crucial qualification regarding the claims of the laws, and this crucial qualification is omitted in the *Crito*. And therefore, as I read in one of Shorey's statements, there are people it seems who like the *Apology* and do not like the *Crito*, and the other way around. Now the one I suppose are the liberals, who like the *Apology*, and the conservatives like the *Crito*. But in order to do justice to Socrates or Plato, one must like both [laughter], and that means one must try as well as one can to reconcile this contradiction.

Now there is a point which Burnet makes to 51b3. He notes that in 51b3, if you have that before you in the Greek text, this "either persuasion," *epeithein*, is bracketed by one of the editors on the ground that it is repeated below in c1, and this leads to certain difficulties. And therefore Burnet, as a sensible man, keeps it in the text. But I think it is more important to realize that in the first case he says "first persuade," and in the second, "do, if you can't persuade." And in the repetition[19] he speaks first of doing and then of persuading the city as to what is by nature just.[20] Of course this persuasion can be done only by someone who knows what is by nature just, i.e., by the knower or by the expert. But this expert has been completely forgotten; we have abstracted from him in this part of the argument, just as we have abstracted throughout from the soul. Now is there a connection between abstraction from the soul and abstraction from the expert, the knower?

Student: It's the soul who knows. [**LS:** Pardon?] without the soul there wouldn't be very much knowing.

LS: Yes[21], or let us say the highest part of the soul is the understanding: that by virtue of which a [277] man can be a knower or expert. Yes. Incidentally, this absolute obedience to obey the father, which is the basis of the argument [22]in this part of the *Crito*, this of course leads also to questions—I mean, and disregarding entirely modern preoccupations with the rights of juvenile delinquentscompletely disregarding these things, these new fangled things—but a serious question existing at all times. For example, if the father is insane and tries to kill your mother, must you remain the obedient son and not do anything, not use any violence? Or even in the case of drunkenness of the father, some resistance might be in order. And this shows again how difficult and insufficient these general statements of Socrates are. We will later on try to state the simple principle underlying these sweeping statements, which are good enough for most purposes but not for all, like honor father and mother. Yes?

Student: How would Socrates justify his disobedience to the Thirty, when they ordered him to go get Leon?[23]

LS: Oh, that's easy; they were an illegitimate government.

Same student: But here he says you should do whatever the city commands; he doesn't say anything about the laws.

LS: All right. Then let us say—how would this be stated in strict terms, the defect of the Socratic argument here? I mean, who commands? I mean, who legislates?

Student: [24]The tyrants didn't represent the city.

LS: Ya, all right. Let us assume that. But in every city, in every commonwealth, there is a legislator, obviously, who is behind all laws. And is this legislator simply the city?

Same student: In some.

LS: That would be more or less the same, the sovereign, but there is a problem concealed by these words, namely, what is concealed is what the Greeks called the *politeia* in contradistinction to the polis. Do we have—

Mr. Reinken: Yes.

LS: [LS writes on the blackboard] *Politeia*. That, incidentally, is the title of Plato's *Republic* in the original, and that has a variety of meanings. The only meaning with which I am concerned now is this: that the *politeia*, which I translate by regime, is that which gives a city its character, its form, its moral tone. You are never confronted by the polis without a *politeia*, without a regime. You are always confronted with a polis formed, dedicated to a specific purpose. Take a simple case from present-day life: we are supposed to be loyal to the United States, but that means of course we are supposed to be loyal to the United States as constituted under the U.S. Constitution as interpreted authoritatively by the Supreme Court now. If someone would say: Out of loyalty to the United States I have become an active communist or Nazi, that plea would not be accepted because loyalty never means loyalty to the mere, to the bare country; it means

always loyalty to the country as politically constituted. We have some difficulties in understanding this thing, not in our practical life, but theoretically. And the reason is, for example, the modern concept of the state, which conceals this crucial question of the variety of regimes. For example, the ordinary translation of this word is "constitution." Some—believe me, quite a few people speak of a history of the British constitution, let us say. This means there is a British constitution which started, well, when? When the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain, probably, or maybe even already under King Arthur and so, and then which underwent all kinds of changes but it is fundamentally the British constitution. This is wholly alien to the classical concept of the regime and as comes particularly clear in Aristotle's statement in the *Politics* that if the regime changes, the result is that there is no longer the same city. Aristotle starts from this observation in the Third Book of the *Politics*, the most important part of the *Politics*. When there was a tyrant or an oligarchic clique in control and they have been disposed of by a revolution, then the people say afterwards: Oh, we don't pay these debts because not the city incurred them, but the tyrant or the clique. The democrats imply, therefore, that as long as the tyranny lasted there was no city, which doesn't mean there was not a town and houses and all kinds of other things, but the polis as a political thing did not exist. So this view then is (and we can generalize from that) [that] the oligarchs would then say, if they are consistent: If there is no oligarchy, there is no polis. Now they would probably not use that term; for some reasons they would say: The city has gone to pieces.

But one could rightly say that a city which has gone to pieces is no longer a city. Does it not make sense? Would you not say of an earthen vessel when it has gone to pieces that it is no longer an earthen vessel? And now Aristotle is confronted with the fact that the partisan, as we may call him—the democratic, oligarchic, or whatever he may be—that the partisan will identify the polis with a polis constructed according to his notion, his partisan notion of justice: democratic, oligarchic, monarchic, whatever it may be. And this is of course not sufficient for a man, for a philosopher who is not a partisan but impartial. And Aristotle in his wisdom therefore says: It is not true that the city has disappeared, has gone to pieces when a change of regime takes place, when a revolution takes place, but that the city has been replaced by another city. This is still hard for us to swallow, because would we not say that it is still the same England whether Henry VIII or Elizabeth I rules? Or Elizabeth II? And Aristotle would say: Ya, in a sense, sure [laughter], but not in the decisive respect. That would be his point, because that to which the England of Elizabeth I was dedicated is not that to which the England of Elizabeth II is dedicated; and this could easily be proven by looking at some famous enactments made under the two queens. You know, in order words, Aristotle takes his bearing by what is highest, that to which people are dedicated, and not to the matter, as he puts it—I mean, the Thames is the Thames, and the Lake country is the Lake country, and so on in England; the matter is the same and they are still racially more or less the same. This is not the highest kind of thing in which you have to look at political phenomena, English or not-English. Yes?

Student: If[25] you change the regime without a revolution—let's say you amend the original constitution and have a regime which is entirely different from the original, but it's changed—

LS: [26]Well, I mean, if you mean by revolution the use of violence, that is relatively unimportant.

Same student: Well, let's say you amend the constitution.

LS: [27]But what does that mean? You see, I deliberately translate it not as is usually done by "constitution," where you think especially in this country of a legal document, but by "regime." You see, a legal document like the U.S. Constitution may be amended and this emendation may not be of radical political importance. You have to consider, then you have to look at it not from the point of view of a lawyer, but from a political point of view. Now let us assume an amendment. The original Constitution had a very severe property qualification, ya? Then of course it was not a democracy. This is a fictitious example in the case of the United States, as I know from Mr. Diamond,[viii] but it could have been. [Laughter] It could have been that the founding fathers had not been unqualified democrats, and then if there had been emendation which took away at one stroke the property qualification and therefore transformed the non-democratic regime into a democratic regime, then there was a qualitative essential change. Does this make sense?

Now of course, if you take such interesting subforms, like whether women have the voting right or not, whether these are radical changes may be doubted, especially in Protestant countries—you know, in Catholic countries there was always a great objection to women's votes because of the alleged addiction of the women to priestly rule, and this would of course then be politically relevant. [Laughter] Only ask an old French Radical Socialist, you know, why they were opposed to the vote of women. So one must be a bit more subtle and make all kinds of distinctions, [more] than Aristotle was compelled to make, in entirely different circumstances. At that time no one thought of the vote of women. And there are other considerations. For example, if you enlarge the vote including juveniles, on the basis of the principle stated by the former President Eisenhower (who is old enough to fight is old enough to vote), if this is a wise principle),[ix] then whether this is politically important or not, that depends. . . . say it is possible that such a change may transform a moderate democracy into an extreme democracy. Well, you have to know the facts in order to judge properly. It's possible, but if it has this effect then it is a politically important change.

Student: I was just curious, when you mentioned loyalty before, what we have our loyalties to, and the question again of Hitler. If he came to power legally, and there wasn't a constitutional change, then a person would still be loyal to him even though there's been—

LS: Yes, but still, at a certain point, doubtless the Nazi regime was dedicated[28] to objectives different from those of the Weimar Constitution, and[29] to have this legal transformation was only a shrewd political device—you know, that everything is legal. But of course no man in his senses was fooled about the fact that one Germany, say, [the] Weimar Republic, was replaced by another Germany, although the rivers, the forests, and so on, remained all the same. And for us this is no longer convincing, so obvious as it was for the Greeks, because we are in a sense less political than they were. You see our point.[30] For example, the whole notion[31] of society in contradistinction to the state, and regarding society as the most important point, has very much to

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[viii] Martin Diamond, a former student of Strauss's, studied and wrote on the American Founders and on American federalism. His essays are collected in *As Far as Republican Principles Will Admit: Collected Essays of Martin Diamond*, ed. William A. Schambra (Washington, D.C.: AEI Press, 1992).

[ix] In his State of the Union Address in 1954, Eisenhower recommended that Congress propose to the states a Constitutional amendment to change the voting age to 18.

do with the depoliticization of our . . . . That the emphasis shifts from the politically relevant, the [280] objectives of the society as politically organized, as politically constituted, to other things, whatever the things may be. What is true of the concept of society is of course also true of the concept of culture or civilization, however you call it. Yes?

Mr. Bolotin: I'm not sure again, then, how this applies to the example of Leon. Does that mean that you're only supposed to be loyal to the city constituted so that the regime is proper?

LS: No, you see the trouble is that whenever you go into specific questions, say, one of Leon of Salamis, and then in listen to what Socrates says on this occasion, then you are confronted with a practical decision using, among other things, legal arguments which are not necessarily of the highest theoretical character. Now starting from very low, theoretically low, here was a regime which seemed to be very promising. You must not forget that Plato—young Plato, about 20 years old—was very interested in what these guys like Critias and Charmides and so did, you know. And then they proved to be gangsters of worst kind, these men who established a rule of justice . . . and virtue, similar to what happened in Germany in 1933, to some extent. Then, as Socrates didn't wish to have anything to do with these people, they misbehaved much more than democracy at its worst. It was so bad that Plato, who was not a lover of Athenian democracy, said that in the light of the conduct of his own relatives there, the old democracy looked like the golden age, which it surely was not. But it was so terrible. So in other words,[32] the prevailing view a few months after the revolution was of course that the laws, the old laws are still valid. He appealed to those laws which had lost their political basis by virtue of the change of regimes, and I suppose if there had been a similar situation under the democracy, that the democracy would have used individual citizens as hangmen, so to speak. Socrates, I'm sure, would also have objected to it. But fortunately the Athenian laws did not use individual citizens who wanted to lead a private life as hangmen. So[33] in order to form a fair judgment you would have to take in the whole situation and to compare comparable things. Now the things with which Socrates compares his conduct under the Thirty is what he did under the democracy on the occasion of the trial of the generals of the Battle of the Arginusae. Now here it was so that, according to Socrates's or Plato's presentation, the Athenian assembly, democratic assembly, behaved illegally by condemning them altogether instead of condemning or judging everyone individually. But here he was unable, so it was also illegal. That was a common principle. What Socrates does not make clear in that context, because it was not necessary, is the complication regarding the political background of the laws. But we have to think of that. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: In your answer, in which you came very close to mentioning the parallel between the *politeia* and the soul in the *Republic*, is the *Crito* perhaps abstracting from the *politeia* in the same breath as from the—

LS: That's a good point.

Mr. Reinken: And the difficulties of knowing when just what is the law reach their extreme form when there is an argument over the regime. So that the weakness of "obey the laws" is: What are the laws? What do the laws really command? And this is why the Socratic argument here won't work. And the extreme example of that breakdown is . . . .

LS: Ya, and to go back to your main point. That is reasonably stated, that the abstraction from the soul is in the last analysis identical with the abstraction from the *politeia*, the *politeia* being the soul of the polis. . . . [x]

On the contrary, what you said would seem to prove, to confirm the older, say, the Platonic-Aristotelian views. What is legal and what is not depends as a matter of principle on the regime, because the laws depend on it. Therefore such things as wars of liberation, as the communists call them, abetted by Moscow or China, or both, have a different legal status according to the communists than they do according to the Americans, so that what is legal and it is not legal depends[34] on primary political considerations, decisions. And[35] then that is of course also a legalism, especially among international lawyers who do not care for that and say simply [that] there is [a so-]called sovereignty of states, principle of nonintervention and a modern principle since the sixteenth century on. The old view was that there is a kind of moral duty to intervene. For example, if you are confronted with a barbaric tribe engaging in all kinds of practices, now cannibalism or religion, and especially against innocent competitors, and there is of course a duty to all humanity to change that state of affairs. . . .

In fact, still, incidentally, there is a beautiful presentation of that issue with the necessary irony in Defoe's famous novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, where[36] Crusoe considers the question: May he interfere with the cannibalism of the natives there or not?[37] And he is a strictly a modern thinker: recognizing the sovereignty of the states, he cannot interfere. But when the temptation is too great because he sees that . . . Friday is about to be eaten, his good heart overcomes his rational principle. [Laughter] So[38] I think I would say that the older view that the political considerations override the legal considerations, in the sense at least of the positive law, made sense. Now the question of course is then—there are all kinds of and very many subquestions, for instance: Is it not better to have any law, however bad, rather than completely arbitrary government? And then one can very well say that law as such, however bad and unjust, acts as some kind of a limitation on arbitrary power. You[39] must not forget that[40] some of the worst things which the Nazis did they did not even on the basis of their own legislation but by simple arbitrary whim and in extralegal influence on the judges.

These are long questions, but the main point, I think, is still intelligible and clear: that law is the work of the legislator or legislative body, and who is the legislator or legislative body depends on the regime. If it is a democracy, then it will be in one way or the other the people at large or their representatives in a nonfictitious sense or, if it is not democratic, then it will be the rich, the men of a certain religion, or maybe of a certain race or whatever it may be, but surely not democratic. And that this is decisive for the spirit of the laws in that community. You wanted to say something:

Student: . . . .

LS: That is the question. That is one of these questions which are inevitable and[41] since it is a very general question, there is only a very general answer possible, and that depends [laughter]—it is a matter of judgment. Well, look at such a situation as Russia, Soviet Russia. It took quite

[x] Just prior to this point, the quality of the recording deteriorated markedly. Here there is an inaudible exchange between Strauss and a student.

some time until people who loathed this kind of regime felt it is here to stay and you have to be "quote realistic unquote." The same discussions we have now, as you know, regarding China. That depends on judgment, and here of course expediency plays a very great role. Let us assume, for example, that by some strange combination of circumstances the more radical communist regime, say, Mao, would become seriously embroiled with the Soviet Union and would need the help of the United States and would therefore be willing to make quite a few concessions. This very wicked regime, the most wicked of all, would appear in a different light than it[42] [did] before. Never forget that the most Catholic king, Louis XIV, was a very good ally of the Turkish sultan against the most Christian House of Hapsburg. These things are inevitable. This is a matter of expediency where one cannot make any rule, any general rule. What you—

Same student: Well, my problem is that when Socrates disobeyed the Thirty Tyrants, he did so on the basis of legality.

LS: Yes, which was of course naturally the democratic legality in the first place.

Same student: Yes, but if the regime had been improved instead of—

LS: In other words—

Same student: If it had been a better regime and if he preferred it, then because of his judgment of what is just, I think he would have gone along immediately with all of their commands.

LS: Yes. That is to say, if they had been truly virtuous and just, Socrates would not have been prevented by any loyalty to democratic legality from adhering to them, surely. But then a simple criterion would be [that] they would not have used Socrates or any other respectable citizen as a potential hangman. That would be a practical criterion for Socrates. You see? I think we also would accept that, that we would not be used for such dirty work as a sign that the government is bearable. Yes.

Mr. Fielding: If the best *politeia* does not exist in fact, and if there is fundamentally not a concern for the soul and knowledge at the root of actually existing regimes, then is not the abstraction from all these things in the *Crito* not an accident?

LS: That was too long a sentence for me. [Laughter] Can you—I had once a student who, when I said a long sentence, said: Please split it into two. And I had to give him first the first half, and then then he said: Yes, now go on to the second half, then he'd put the two together. You must do the same to me.

Mr. Fielding: Well, it would seem that there's grounds to believe that the best *politeia*, that is, the one that is concerned with the soul, dedicated to the soul and—

LS: To virtue, ya.

Mr. Fielding: [43]To virtue, does not exist as a political regime.

LS: All right, in the strict sense, yes.

Mr. Fielding: And then it would seem that the abstraction from all these things in this particular dialogue, the *Crito*, is not an accident, that is, insofar as the dialogue seems to be oriented toward this world and what actually occurs, it would have to abstract.

LS: Well, let me put it this way. Since the whole dialogue is based entirely on the question of the established democracy, the question of the goodness of the democracy and its laws doesn't arise. But you will see very soon that this is not quite true, and therefore let's wait.

Now we go on, and I make first this general statement. The issue has been settled. Why does Socrates go on? Has he gone too far in demanding unqualified passive and active obedience to whatever the fatherland commands? In other words, has he gone too far in regarding the citizen as simply the slave of the laws? One point has been neglected entirely since 50c4 to 6, namely, the need for agreement or covenant between Socrates and the laws, especially regarding accepting the judicial decisions of the city. There is no covenant between father and son or between master and slave, although later men (for instance, Hobbes) tried to put all relations on a consensual, contractual basis. In other words, Socrates has to remedy the effect of the argument regarding the goodness of the Athenian laws. You remember he stated that the Athenian laws regarding marriage and elementary education are good, and starting from that he jumped at the conclusion that one must be absolutely subservient to all Athenian law. This is a very bad jump, so he must remedy this defect, and this he will do in the sequel. Now let us begin, Mr. Reinken.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'Observe then, Socrates,' perhaps the laws would say, 'that if what we say is true, what you are now undertaking to do to us is not right. For we brought you into the world, nurtured—'" (51c7-51c10)

LS: No, no: "'we generated you,'" quite clearly.

Mr. Reinken: "'generated[xi] you—'" (51c10)

LS: "We are male."

Mr. Reinken: Ah. "'we begat you,[xii] nurtured you, and gave a share of all the good things we could to you—'" (51c 10-51d 1).

LS: No, not "all the good things": "of the noble things." "And we gave a share of noble things to—"

Mr. Reinken: "'to you and all the citizens.'" (51c 11-51d 1)

LS: Ya. "Of which we are able."

[xi] In original: "nurtured"
[xii] In original: "we brought you into the world"

Mr. Reinken: Yeah, yeah, "'all the noble[xiii] things we could to you and all the citizens.'" (51c 11-51d 1)

LS: So the laws gave to Socrates what they gave to every other Athenian citizen as well, i.e., they gave to Socrates no more and no less than what they gave to the many. They gave him only such noble things as they were able to give to everyone. That is already an indication of the limitation of the laws. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Yet we proclaim, by having offered the opportunity to any of the Athenians who wishes to avail himself of it, that anyone who is not pleased with us when he has become a man and has seen the administration of the city and us, the laws, may take his goods and go away wherever he likes.'" (51d 1-51d 6)

LS: Ya. So now we come to an entirely different point. The laws claim now that they treat the citizens not as slaves or serfs or children, but as free men. And therefore they imply that unqualified submission without freedom of submission or not submission lacks binding force. In other words,[44] the thought which[45] [Socrates] suggests is fundamentally the same as that which has become so famous especially through Rousseau's *Social Contract*. You are not bound except on the basis of previous consent of yourself. This is a great supplement. The laws may not be good, but if you have agreed to them, then you are obliged to obey them. Now we must not forget, however[46]—I cannot possibly even allude to the history of the notion of the social contract. Let us take only that most famous example, that of Rousseau. What is the difference between Rousseau's concept of the social contract and Socrates's whole position? At the starting point of Rousseau, as everybody knows, is the natural equality of all men, or so it seems. And Socrates questions that. Socrates starts from the premise of inequality. We will see later on whether this is of any importance. Now men are subject to their parents and their masters without a covenant; I mean, how could a newly-born child make a covenant that he will obey his parents provided they will bring him up or so? All obligation, political obligation—that is the point—must rest on consent. Let us see what follows from that. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "And none of us stands in the way or forbids any of you to take his goods and go away wherever he pleases, if we and the city[xiv] do not please him, whether it be to an Athenian colony or to a foreign country where he will live as an alien." (51d 7-51e 1)

LS: Ya. You see now, apparently he merely repeats what he has said just before. But to mention only the most important change, the laws add now to the laws, the city. Now, and this[47] forces us to raise this question: May one not like a city without liking all its laws? There is a reference in d5—"and none of us laws"—a reference to the plurality of the law. Some laws may be good and others may not be good. Yes?

[xiii] In original: "good"
[xiv] In original: "state"

Mr. Reinken: "But we say that whoever of you stays here, seeing how we administer justice and 285
how we govern the city[xv] in other respects, and thereby enter[xvi] into an agreement with us to do what we command—" (51e 1-51e 5)

LS: Ya, "by deed." By deed. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "By his deed" (51e 5).

LS: Ya. Now, so remaining in Athens, in other words, beyond one's babyhood, so to speak, amounts to a tacit agreement, a tacit contract to do everything which the laws command. This consideration supercedes now the argument taken from one's being the slave or child of the fatherland or of the law. But we must see whether this is literally true, this suggestion. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "and we say that he who does not obey does threefold wrong, because he disobeys us who are his parents, because he disobeys us who nurtured him, and because after agreeing to obey us he neither obeys us nor convinces us that we are wrong, though we give him the opportunity and do not roughly order him—" (51e 5-52a 2)

LS: Now wait a moment here. Now Socrates, you see, tries to keep both heterogeneous considerations, the consideration taken from the master character of the laws, parent character, and from the agreement character. He slightly blurs the heterogeneity by speaking of three reasons for unqualified obedience to the law. And why this? Now here the laws make a distinction between themselves as generators and as educators or upbringers. This leads to the question: Does the mere generating of a child without bringing him up, and in particular bringing him up properly, give a man the right to be obeyed by the child? You know, that is a difficult question and if you want to have it spelled out in all details, you should read the *Second Treatise* of Locke, chapter 8, Of Paternal Power, where this question is discussed: To what is the authority of the parent—say, in the case of gross neglect, can he still demand rightly to be honored by his offspring or not? Or incidentally also the question: Why should a slave be bound to obey his master? That is of course a still more obvious question. Yes. Re-read the last part. And in the third point he had agreed to obey—

Mr. Reinken: "'after agreeing to obey us he neither obeys us nor convinces us that we are wrong, though we give—'" (51e8-52a1)

LS: No, "'neither persuades us if we do something not nobly.'" Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'nor persuades us if we do something ignoble,[xvii] though we give him the opportunity and do not roughly order him to do what we command, but when we allow him a choice of two things, either to persuade[xviii] us of error or to do our bidding, he does neither of these things.'" (51e9-52a5)

[xv] In original: "state"
[xvi] In original: "and has thereby entered"
[xvii] In original: "nor convinces us that we are wrong"
[xviii] In original: "convince"

LS: Now we have the argument which shows us the character of this whole thing. The Athenian laws are mild, reasonably sweet or sweetly reasonable, and this is the ground why they are binding. Contrary to what was said, especially in 50e7 following, you know, that you must not hit back and must not insult when you are insulted or this kind of thing[48], they are very nice. They give you the opportunity to persuade them, but if you fail to persuade them, then the sweet reasonableness stops, of course. If you cannot persuade the laws that what they prescribe is bad or base, they naturally cease to be sweet and reasonable. And the laws point out to Socrates that he never tried to persuade the Athenians of the unreasonableness of any Athenian law. Now we have an example in the *Apology*, 37a7 to b1, where Socrates speaks of the Athenian law regarding capital punishment, that they—what is the precise point?

Mr. Reinken: That these trials shouldn't be settled in one day only.

LS: Yes, so that there is proper consideration because of the seriousness of the charge. So Socrates says this would be better if this were done not in one day but that people could sleep over it. But why did Socrates never try to persuade the sweet, reasonable laws of Athens to correct what was not so good in them? Why?

Mr. Schaefer: He says in the *Apology* that if he had tried he wouldn't have lasted very long.

LS: Yes, well, if we want to be quite orthodox we would have first to say that his *daimonion* prevented him, ya? But[49] the *daimonion* was reasonable because political activity would have led to his premature death. In other words, there was no possibility of persuading the Athenian laws. The Athenian laws were tyrannical, at least as far as Socrates was concerned. They would never listen to him. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Aren't the laws boasting a little, literally, as far as Crito would be concerned, when he says: Any of you can go away wherever he likes? They don't quite say: Whenever he like. But all Crito has asked is that Socrates exercise his option to take his goods and go.

LS: Ya, but the trouble—but now he has been condemned. He could have—

Mr. Reinken: So this is a limitation on the state of the laws, that they—

LS: No, they would have permitted him to go away prior to the trial.

Mr. Reinken: . . . .

LS: No, prior to the trial. But[50] once he was condemned, then he had to be executed. We come to that; he takes up that. There is no objection. Yes, but the more important point is the contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito* regarding the possibility of persuasion, which is a major argument meant to prove that the laws of Athens[51] are morally binding, as you would say, because they give every citizen the opportunity to persuade them. And we see that is by no means the case. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "We say that you, Socrates, will be exposed to these reproaches, if you do what you have in mind, and you not least of the Athenians but more than most others." If then I should say, "How so?" perhaps they might retort with justice that I had made this agreement with them more emphatically than most other Athenians. For they would say, "Socrates, we have strong evidence that we and the city pleased you; for you would never have stayed in it more than all the[xix] other Athenians if you had not been better pleased with it than they; you never went out from the city to a festival, or anywhere else, except military service, and you never made any other journey, as other people do, and you had no wish—" (52a5-52b8)

LS: Well, wait a moment. Except once to the Isthmus, to the Isthmus of Corinth. He once went there.

Mr. Reinken: Once to the Isthmus, "as other people do, and you had no wish to know any other city or other laws, but you were contented with us and our city. So strongly did you prefer us and agree to live in accordance with us; and besides, you begat children in the city, showing that it pleased you." (52b 8-52c 3)

LS: Yes, let us stop here. So Socrates now turns this state of things, the fact that the city's mildness and sweet reasonableness can be questioned to the advantage not of himself, but of the laws. He admits that his case is unique. Socrates's whole conduct shows that he was singularly pleased with the city of Athens and hence with all her laws. Now, his conduct surely proves that he liked to live in Athens; there is no doubt about that. But does it prove that he liked the Athenian laws? After all, there is more to a city than its laws. More precisely, that he regarded the Athenian laws as good? There is a discussion of this subject, although not in these words, in a very well-known place, in the Eighth Book of Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates discusses the five regimes. He makes there a distinction between five regimes, in descending order. Now the order is this [LS writes on the blackboard]: aristocracy, that is the rule dedicated to virtue, and that in the *Republic* means of course the rule of the philosopher-kings plus absolute communism. And then we have—how does he call it here?

Mr. Reinken: Timocracy.

LS: Timocracy. That is, timocracy, i.e., where virtue is replaced by honor, which is a lower principle but still respectable. Then oligarchy, which is the rule of wealth—and in other words, no concern with virtue or honor, only with wealth, but still respectable because these stingy, avaricious fellows exercise some self-control regarding their sensual desires because they love to amass money. And then we come to democracy finally—and democracy is complete license: freedom is fine. And finally, tyranny, and tyranny is of course unqualified injustice.[xx]

Now the point is that this is a simply descending order, and it is made very clear. But there is some reference in this discussion to another famous arrangement, not of regimes, but of kinds of [men], races of men, namely, in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. There are five races: the first is of

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[xix] "the" is not in the translation but added by Mr. Reinken.

[xx] Strauss writes the names of each of the regimes on the blackboard.

course the golden; and then comes the silver age, descending, as you see; and then bronze; and then the heroes; and then iron, the iron age.[xxi] So in other words, in Hesiod you have on the whole a descending order, but a strange interruption of the descent in the fourth place. And there are all kinds of explanations for that [that are] possible. I have no explanation, but [laughter] Plato uses it, and Plato gives it a sense of its own in the application to the descending order of the regimes. Democracy alone makes an exception to the descent. Why? Because democracy, with its notorious license of everything, bad and good, permits philosophy, whereas the philosophers are permitted only in the aristocracy strictly understood. The rule of the philosophers, naturally if they are rulers, they will be permitted. And they are out of the question in timocracy, which is Sparta, which makes very much sense, and also among the people concerned only with wealth; and of course also impossible under tyranny, according to this pious teaching here. But they are permitted, as everyone knows, in democracy. Socrates himself, after all, lived and flourished in a democracy, and therefore this has of course a great bearing. So Socrates could live and do what he liked in the highest sense of the word under a democracy, which he could not have done, say, in Sparta. In Sparta he would probably have been exposed as an infant because they would have smelled to begin with that he was not exactly what the Spartan order desired.

Now, where is this point? Ya, in the Eighth Book of the *Republic*. Now one point which I forgot: if, for reasons which I cannot now specify (it takes too long), one can show that the best regime of the *Republic*, i.e., the philosopher kings, is impossible. Let us assume that for one moment. Then the only regime in which philosophy is possible would be democracy, which of course makes great sense historically speaking because it was in democratic Athens above all where classical philosophy flourished. And therefore one can say the only regime that is possible in which there can be philosophy is democracy, a rather defective regime because it is in no way concerned with self-restraint—that is true up to the present-day—and therefore of incredible mildness, especially in its penal law. There is a long description in the *Republic* 558a to b that in a democracy you may be condemned to death or exile and just walk around as if nothing has happened. Now it is of course unfortunately not universally true, and especially not in the case of Socrates. But we do not know whether, if Socrates had tried to flee from prison, some Athenian authorities would not have minded it. That we do not know. Good. I thought that we should just mention that.

Mr. Reinken: Wouldn't it be a simpler proof of the matter—you don't have to prove the impossibility of the aristocracy, but the *Republic* rests on compelling the philosophers to stop philosophizing.

LS: For long periods, yes.

Mr. Reinken: Democracy is not freedom. Democracy has more philosophy than the best regime because the philosophers are allowed to walk around in the streets and do what they like. But the best regime rests on denying philosophizing.

LS: That's true, ya, but still, if we look at it realistically [laughter], we must consider there is some difficulty. You know, for example, there must be some visible or invisible means of support. Now if one is wealthy, as Plato was of course, then he knows he can live on his wealth.

[xxi] Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109-201.

But then he must also administer his wealth. This can be quite time-consuming. Say you rent your land and the fellows are not necessarily dependable—you have to go after them. That takes time. You have to go before law courts, perhaps. Or if you are poor, of ten-thousand fold poverty as Socrates says he is, then you have also to do something to live. At least Socrates had to take care of the many private problems of his friend Crito. You remember the story when he had to find an antisycophant to keep the sycophants away, and some other things? So[52] the question is whether these duties of public administration imposed on the philosophers in Plato's best regime are greater—I suppose they are, eventually—greater hardships than the private dependencies. Yes, I will admit that. Good. Now where were we? In 52c3, this is the point. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Yes.[53] *Soc*: "'and moreover even at your trial you might have offered exile as your penalty, if you wished, and might have done with the city's[xxii] consent what you are now undertaking to do without it. But you then put on airs and said you were not disturbed if you must die, and you preferred, as you said, death to exile.'" (52c3-52c9)

LS: Ya, let us stop here. By trying to escape now, Socrates would contradict not only his deed, namely, his tacit agreement, speechless agreement, but his own *logoi* on the occasion of the trial, where he had the opportunity to[54] prefer exile, and they[55] might gladly have exiled him. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> "And now you are not ashamed to think of those words and you do not respect us, the laws, since you are trying to bring to us to naught; and you are doing what the meanest slave would do, since you are trying to run away contrary to the compacts and agreements you made with us that you would live in accordance with us. First then, answer this question, whether we speak the truth or not when we say that you agreed, not in word, but by your acts, to live in accordance with us." What shall we say to this, Crito? Must we not agree that it is true?
> Crito: "We must, Socrates." (52c 9-52d 10)

LS: Yes. Now Socrates returns now to the injustice which he would do to the laws by breaking his covenant with them, and this is now the only reason why Socrates is obliged to stay in prison. The only reason is that covenant. The previous consideration, that he is the child of the laws, is now completely dropped. Yes. And as you see, when you look,[56] everything is now settled, that Socrates must stay in prison, and it is settled on both grounds: on the grounds of the absolute submission like a child or a slave; and on grounds of the tacit compact. So[57] each of the arguments is defective, but the defects of one are remedied by the virtues of the other. And the question is whether the mutual correction of the two kinds of arguments makes the whole argument a sound one. That is the question, whether[58] [some] entirely different consideration does not have to be introduced. And as a matter of fact (I think we should not read on because the time is too short), Socrates will introduce an entirely different consideration, so that the two heterogeneous arguments he has used hitherto form one argument in contradistinction to the argument which he will introduce very soon now. The[59] two arguments form one argument insofar as they are both based on consideration of what is just, and just defined either in the sense of patriarchalism, or of contractualism. That is a subdivision. And then beginning from 53b on, Socrates will argue no longer on the basis of the just but on the basis of the good: in other words,

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[xxii] In original: "state's"

on the basis of expediency. So we will see then that this implies, this distinction implies that the previous simple equation of the good with the just is not valid, otherwise we couldn't make the distinction. But one could come to the assistance of Socrates in this point,[60] (and this would last for quite some time, although I believe it wouldn't last till the end of the day), by saying that the argument from justice is based on the identification of the just and the legal. Now that the good should be identical with the legal simply, no man in his senses would say because there may be bad laws. Therefore, be this as it may, Socrates is compelled to go beyond what he calls here considerations of justice and introduce considerations of expediency, why he should not escape from prison. And we must consider that argument and we must consider also the whole argument then, whether and to what extent it is demonstrative.

Now there is one point [that] has to be considered, and we will take it up at the end of this discussion: deeds are more trustworthy than speeches. The deed of Socrates is that he did not run away but stayed in jail; therefore he chose to stay there. He had a reason for staying there, a *logos*. So there was a *logos* of Socrates in favor of staying in jail and undergoing capital punishment. This *logos* of Socrates is not necessarily identical with the *logos* which he presents to Crito, or perhaps we should say Socrates's serious *logos* is only a part of that extensive *logos* which he presents to Crito. And we would have to see which part of that whole *logos* is serious and which is not. And then we would have to raise the question, of course, if there should be a non-serious part why Socrates goes to the trouble of adding such a non-serious part. Yes

Student: Well, I was just wondering, Socrates seems to imply that it isn't really tacit consent. Just living in the state is enough to prove to the state that he likes it. But what about a man like Thoreau, who lived in the state but yet, you know, whenever there was an unjust law or something that he felt went against his own will he just refused to obey it. But yet—

LS: Sure.

Same student: He used the state in every other action.

LS: Yes.

Same student: So isn't that sort of like really simplifying things, to—

LS: Yes, I think so. And Socrates alludes to that I think quite clearly by making the inference that if you stay in a land, in a country, and you have the opportunity to go to another country, then one can presume that you like it, that you like to stay where you live for God knows what reason, perhaps simple attachment to the country or attachment to your family, whatever it may be. But the conclusion from attachment to the country to attachment, i.e., high regard for the laws of that country is not valid, ya? That's clear. And Socrates will make it, I think, clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that the argument is not conclusive in what follows when he discusses the alternatives which he has if he would consider running away. But that I must postpone until next time.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "one—."

[2] Deleted “this—.”

[3] Deleted “when—.”

[4] Deleted “let—.”

[5] Deleted “you cannot—.”

[6] Deleted “is, and this—the rationale, that is, of the absorption.”

[7] Deleted “it is—.”

[8] Deleted “between Socrates—.”

[9] Deleted “that is—.”

[10] Deleted “Hence one—.”

[11] Deleted “analogy between”

[12] Deleted “if—.”

[13] Deleted “Yes.”

[14] Deleted “ours.”

[15] Deleted “That is—yeah.”

[16] Deleted “say.”

[17] Deleted “first he had said before—I mean.”

[18] Deleted “that is un—that is at least—.”

[19] Deleted “he says—.”

[20] Deleted “Yes. This is—I thinking we—we can—and—and—of—.”

[21] Deleted “One could—yes. Alright.”

[22] Deleted “in this section”

[23] Deleted “LS: To whom?

Q: To the Thirty.”

[24] Deleted “A: I don’t understand.

A: The Athenian—

LS: Pardon?”

[25] Deleted “if you want—if.”

[26] Deleted “What—what do you—.”

[27] Deleted “Yeah, the—what—yeah—.”

[28] Deleted “to different—.”

[29] Deleted “this was—.”

[30] Deleted “I mean, because we—.”

[31] Deleted “of social.”

[32] Deleted “Socrates—.”

[33] Deleted “you have to.”

[34] Deleted “on political—.”

[35] Deleted “the—here—.”

[36] Deleted “the—.”

[37] Deleted “You know?”

[38] Deleted “that—I—.”

[39] Deleted “know? You—you.”

[40] Deleted “quite a few things—.”

[41] Deleted “to which there is only—.”

[42] Deleted “is.”

[43] Deleted “Yeah.”

[44] Deleted “what Socrates—.”

[45] Deleted “he.”

[46] Deleted “the—.”

[47] Deleted “this means—.”

[48] Deleted “on this kind of thing. That is very—.”

[49] Deleted “we would I—I—because political—and.”

[50] Deleted “once the trial—.”

[51] Deleted “have—.”

[52] Deleted “there are—.”

[53] Deleted “Just that—.”

[54] Deleted “say—.”

[55] Deleted “would have gladly—.”

[56] Deleted “there is—this is.”

[57] Deleted “the defects—.”

[58] Deleted “something.”

[59] Deleted “first argument consisted—the.”

[60] Deleted “by—for—.”

Session 14: December 6, 1966

Leo Strauss: So let us come to order. If everything goes well we shall finish our study of the *Crito* today and have then two more meetings free for the discussion of Xenophon's critique of the charge against Socrates. We are now studying Socrates's reply to Crito. I remind you of the main points. First, Socrates had said that only the opinion of the knowers or experts, as distinguished from the many, must be considered. And this applies especially to the opinions of the knowers or experts regarding the good, the noble, and the just things, if there are such knowers. Now this crucial "if" indicates a difficulty, and therefore Socrates has to turn to another way of argument in the second point, where he disregards the question as to whether there are such knowers. And here he states one must not do injustice to anyone, and hence in particular not do injustice to someone who has done injustice to oneself in the first place. And doing injustice is identified with doing harm to human beings. After having made this point Socrates personifies the laws, he makes them persons, and he asserts that the laws assert that Socrates would commit injustice against the laws if he were to try to run away. And here[1] we saw at once a difficulty: Are the laws, personified or not, human beings? For if they are not human beings, how can you do injustice by doing harm to the laws?

Now the specific points which Socrates makes the laws make are these: the laws generated Socrates and brought him up. He is more subject to the laws than a child to his father or a slave to his master. He must suffer and do whatever the laws command. Then a second argument: a very important kind of doing injustice is breaking a just agreement with someone with whom you have made such an agreement. In trying to escape from prison Socrates will break his tacit agreement with the laws, which was to the effect that he will suffer and do whatever the laws command. So the conclusion is the same in both cases: he must suffer and do whatever the laws command. This incongruity of the two arguments, the one taken from Socrates being a child or a slave, and the other Socrates having made an agreement with the laws: there is no reference to an agreement, compact, covenant, or however you call it in the first argument, unless one were to construe the relation between master and slave or that between father and child as a contractual relation—which was done later on, most visibly in Hobbes, but before him to some extent by Althusius, a writer of the early seventeenth century.

Now why does Socrates juxtapose these two heterogeneous arguments, the one taken from a non-contractual relation, and the other from a contractual relation? Well, the non-contractual, the obligation deriving from non-contractual relation, is questionable because it might well appear to be tyrannical that you should be compelled to suffer and do whatever the laws command without having given your agreement. And from this point of view, the argument taken from agreement, covenant, or compact seems to be more reasonable, more humane, But the question is, of course, whether it is sufficient. Did Socrates in fact make such a tacit pact with the laws? Did the fact that Socrates liked to live in Athens prove that he approved of all her laws? We know from the *Apology*, from a contemporary work, that he did not like all the laws of Athens, for example, the law regarding capital trials. Furthermore, another important implication of the argument taken from the contractual relation is that the laws of the city are very nice because they permit you to persuade the city or the laws to change the laws and so give you a fair deal. But the question is: Would Socrates ever have succeeded in persuading the laws? And the plausible answer is: No;

and the reason, the simple reason being that he would never try to persuade the city. And the reason was, as we know, his *daimonion*. He knew that he would not survive for very long an entry into the political scene. Now this much we have discussed last time, and we will continue at 52c3. But before we read, I would like to ask Mr. Bruell—he has a question or an objection.

Mr. Bruell: Well, the question is, first of all: Is the problem of whether there is an expert or not related to or perhaps even answered by Socrates characterizing his knowledge as knowledge of ignorance? And in the second place, what is the relation of this problem as to whether there's an expert or not, or whether Socrates's knowledge is knowledge of ignorance, to the justice of his staying in jail, and also the question of the justice of his condemnation?

LS: Now let us proceed step by step. You admit, I take it, that knowledge of ignorance is not ignorance.

Mr. Bruell: Yes.

LS: So by knowing that he does not know, Socrates knows, for example, what the most important things are or whatever the most important questions are, although he does not necessarily have an adequate answer to that. Is that it?

Mr. Bruell: Yes.

LS: Good. Now, and in this there is implied, I take it, that he knows what is the good life, which is something quite positive, namely, that the good life is the life of investigation, examination, however we call it, the philosophic life. Would you admit that this is reasonable to presuppose?

Mr. Bruell: Yes.

LS: Good. But let us then assume that it is not possible to devote one's life to investigation if one lives by oneself in a desert. Would you admit that? [Laughter] So in other words, some form of political life seems to be necessary. After all, in a state of complete anarchy, constant turmoil, and so on, it's hard to concentrate, to say nothing of the fact that before Socrates could devote himself to the philosophic life he had to reach a certain age, and he did not yet know that the philosophic life was the best life when he was a baby. So he needed some protection, and there is a certain kind of attachment growing from this protection which normal human beings have and which must not be disregarded. So in brief: since the philosophic life presupposes society of a sort, there is a kind of obligation to the society which makes possible philosophy. Does it not make sense? The issue is discussed in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, where Socrates is presented as altogether indifferent to the city and her fate. And there is one argument which is made there by a simple citizen—I believe it is old Strepsiades himself who says (or is it the just *logos*? I do not remember at the moment)[i] who says: The city feeds you; you know, one good deed is worth another. So there is a kind of obligation arising from this dependence. Does this not make sense, that if you owe the condition of what you regard as the best life to somebody else then you are obliged to that somebody else?

[i] Aristophanes, *Clouds* 926-927. See also Leo Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, 1980).

Mr. Bruell: [2]Well, one can owe the condition without being completely responsive. In other words, the city is necessary but not sufficient.

LS: Yes, but to the extent to which it is necessary, one must do everything that one can to keep it alive, especially after one has declared by deed one's unwillingness to exchange one city for another. And this of course would mean you would only change your obligation from city A to city B. So this would still remain. So certain consequences regarding justice, it would seem, follow from the premise that the philosophic life is the good life.

Mr. Bruell: But then it would seem that the problem of the expert is not a problem at all, that one can know from—

LS: Ya, I see. In other words, that Socrates, who knows[3] or claims to know that the philosophic life is the best life, knows also that certain duties derive from that,[4] but not, for example, the duty to engage into politics. That he made clear. And hence also not the duty to try to persuade the laws to change themselves or the polis. But the question is then, of course: What about this very particular case? Could Socrates justly escape from jail? That's your point. We do not have all the evidence yet. Because the arguments, the main points of which I repeated, are only a part of the argument; we still come to other ones.

Mr. Bruell: I do still have one further question. Then I don't see the force of the doubt about whether or not there is an answer. I mean, is that doubt something simply associated with this dialogue and necessary in this dialogue, or does it point to a more—

LS: Ya. Well, I think one can say that. And say this, that what happens in the *Crito* is that the problematic expert, I mean the expert regarding which it is a problem whether he exists or not, that the problematic expert is replaced by the laws, and the laws are taken as a kind of superhuman beings. What they are is not made clear, but a simple reflection would show that the laws of Athens are the work of the Athenian *demos*, i.e., they are opinions of the many; and so that, contrary to what was said in argument number one, the opinions of the many are of no account—the opinions of the many, now turned into laws, are much more powerful and much more authoritative than the opinions of the expert. In other words, the *Crito* indicates and evades at the same time the problematic character of the laws. But there is no difficulty here, I will speak of that later, because this is set, in Greek, *pros Critona*, toward Crito, and therefore, since Crito is pleased with it, why should we be not pleased that? Yes?

Mr. Bruell: [5]At one point you said if there is not an expert then the laws have much greater weight.

LS: Yes.

Mr. Bruell: And that whether or not there is an expert seems to be left in doubt, and therefore—

LS: Yes, if you forget about the experts[6], the question of the laws ceases to be so great. You can also state it differently in more traditional language, but language alluded to in the *Crito*, as we

have seen: If there is no natural right, if all right is positive, then you cannot criticize any positive[296] right except on very secondary grounds. That is, different positive laws contradict each other and therefore the judges wouldn't know what to do, and so on and so on, which is good as far as it goes. But a consistent, nasty positive law could not possibly be criticized. And you remember the passage where he said in Athens one could persuade the laws or the polis of what is by nature right? You remember that passage? That was an important reference. Yes. I think your question is connected, as I know—

Mr. Bolotin: I'll try to pursue the point. You talked about Socrates's obligation to the city . . . if you obviously wouldn't deny that he has an obligation towards himself to lead the best way of life, philosophy.

LS: Yes.

Mr. Bolotin: Now in this case, since Socrates is an old man, there seems to be a harmony between his obligation to the city and his obligation to himself.

LS: Ya. Ya.

Mr. Bolotin: I wonder what happens if he's a younger man and his obligation towards the city—

LS: Ya, well, that is everybody's guess.

Mr. Bolotin: Well, why is it just a guess? [Laughter]

LS: Well, that also depends on the—I would say that depends very much on the circumstances. But surely the argument taking from old age cannot be applied to a young man. Usually, that is surely true. But if you take the young man and put, say, a Socrates of 25 here, confronted with a choice between dying unreasonably and dedicating his life to philosophy, [he] would be in a different position than Socrates of 70. But then you would have to know the situation. For example, let us assume Athens is at war at the time, and he would just burn his draft card or something else. Then one would have to go into that. Is that a wise course of action? It depends a bit on the enemy, for example. If the enemy is an enemy of all culture and of philosophy, the situation would be somewhat different than if he is a highly civilized enemy. That one would have to consider, and many other things. Yes?

Mr. Vitullo: On the point of Socrates's obligation to the city, in the *Clouds* Socrates is shown to be living from—aside from petty thievery, from gifts, and does the obligation—

LS: Occasionally petty thievery. [Laughter]

Mr. Vitullo: [7]Do you speak of an obligation, that Socrates incurs an obligation when he's specifically set as receiving gifts? And I assume that, in return for the gifts, he gives gifts of knowledge or—

LS: Ya.

Mr. Vitullo: But you still don't see that as—

LS: But if people feel grateful to Socrates for the nice things he told them about the stings of gnats, and other things, there is nothing wrong if the people show their gratitude by some gifts which keep his body and soul together. Or do you think there is something wrong? Unless there were a law against the receiving of gifts, which is not likely—which surely didn't exist in Athens.

Mr. Vitullo: I thought there was[8] some special character about gift, though that—

LS: Ya, but the point is that this book, the *Crito*, is written by Plato, not by Aristophanes. Now Plato never presented Socrates as doing such slight irregularities as engaging occasionally in petty theft, but Socrates is presented as a perfect model of a man.

Mr. Bolotin: Excuse me for . . . but on the same point, you said that one of the considerations which would affect Socrates, if as a younger man he had the same choice, was whether all philosophy was threatened . . . . But[9] if all philosophy is threatened there might be a conflict between his obligation to himself as a philosopher—

LS: Might be—

Mr. Bolotin: And his obligation to all philosophy.

LS: Might be.

Mr. Bolotin: How would you decide that?

LS: Ya, well, that obviously depends—you would have to elaborate the case. You cannot decide a case if you do not know all the relevant circumstances. But that there could be conflicts is undeniable. Socrates has stated it only in very general terms in the *Apology*, but not in the *Crito*: if the city were to make it a crime to philosophize he would not obey that law, whatever the penalty might be. But this is only an extreme case.[10]

You, and then you will be the last one, because we must really try to finish the *Crito*.

Student: [11]You made a statement that if there is no natural right, then we can't criticize positive right. And if there is this natural right and no one recognizes it, does it really do us any good?

LS: [12]No, that is a question—

Same student: Something else that bothers me[13]: if you assume there isn't a natural right, are you saying that you can't criticize any positive right whatsoever on any other grounds?

LS: Ya, ya. On which ground would you do it? Well, take a simple case. In the present-day discussion of civil rights in this country, what's the basis of that?[14] They don't speak of natural right—most of them surely not.

Same student: [15]They criticize on utilitarian ground.

LS: Ya. Or still more, but what does utilitarian mean if this is not a disguised form of natural right? I believe they refer frequently to Supreme Court decisions. Did you hear that? . . . That means of course to positive law. Or even if one refers to the Declaration of Independence—not as the signers of the Declaration meant it, but as a kind of fundamental law of the land, even more fundamental than the Constitution, that is still positive law. You could not, say, in Ceylon, argue on the basis of the Declaration of Independence, whereas you could argue in principle everywhere at any time on the basis of natural right, according to the meaning of natural right. And utilitarianism, the view that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the standard of legislation, that's not a positive law standard.

Student: What about extending—

LS: Does it not mean, in other words, it is intrinsically just to do whatever benefits the greatest number?

Same student: No, I meant more like it may mean better for the working of the society if everyone were allowed to—

LS: What does "better working of society" mean? What does that mean? In its way, the Nazi society also worked, and it worked in many ways better than a democratic society. What does working mean? It means working with a view to certain desired ends. And why are these desired ends preferable to other ends which also are desired by human beings? Answer: because they are intrinsically just,[16] [naturally] right. I think that merely blurs the issues. Well, when Bentham's opposition to natural law was an opposition to a certain kind of natural law and a very rigid understanding of natural law, you know, the ordinary understanding of Locke, property rights, this is *the* natural right. And that is of course a very narrow understanding of natural right. But every criticism which is more than a criticism based on the law of the land must in fact refer to natural right. Whether it sees it or not is another matter. Yes.

Mr. Schaefer: Concerning the first phase of Socrates's argument, does it necessarily undermine the argument from experts if there are no experts? Or does all one need is in principle [the] possibility of experts? In order to criticize the—

LS: What do you mean by that? There might be experts but we don't know whether they are.

Mr. Schaefer: Well, no. In other words, if there are no experts but it's in principle possible that there[17] can be an expert, meaning that we can have opinions about the rightness and wrongness of laws, but not knowledge.

LS: No, then opinion has no higher status—opinion A has no higher status than opinion non-A. Only knowledge can claim a higher status than any opinion.

Mr. Schaefer: People will still claim that they have true opinion and others have false opinion.

LS: [18]Of course, the people who have terrible opinions will always say that these are the true opinions. [Mr. Schaefer continues to speak] Ultimately, you have to transcend opinion and come to knowledge. Even the Nazis admitted that. Why did they elaborate what they called their racial science? Science. Why did they do that? Because they needed, they felt somehow the superiority of knowledge to opinion.

Mr. Schaefer: So you can't say that one must do what an expert would do unless one can either claim to be or to know an expert.

LS: No,[19] the simple solution would be if there are experts. Then we defer to the experts just as we defer to them in the case of the wellbeing of our bodies. But if there are no experts, i.e., if there is no knowledge possible in that sphere (as is today the preferred view, as you know), then what can you do,[20] as most people feel most of the time that there must be some rule of conduct, because otherwise there would be constant conflict. And that means the law. And that there are people around at all times who either by deed or even by speech don't consider the laws does not do away with the great practical importance of laws because, as you see from the fact that even the Syndicate is very much concerned with having what they call mouthpieces, you know, who before the law in terms of the law tries to prove that these gangsters are lawabiding citizens: strong proof of the power of law even among most lawless people. Now let us first[21] complete our study of the *Crito*.

Mr. Reinken: I think we've come almost to the end of 52d.

LS: Ya. But let us nevertheless—

Mr. Reinken: But repeat from 52c3.

LS: Yes[22], "furthermore."[23]

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'And moreover even at your trial you might have offered exile as your penalty, if you wished, and might have done with the city's[ii] consent what you are now undertaking to do without it. But you then put on airs and said you were not disturbed if you must die, and you preferred, as you said, death to exile.'" (52c 3-52c 9)

LS: Ya. So by trying to escape now, Socrates would contradict not only his deed, his tacit agreement with the city, but his own speech which he made, namely, that exile is not a desirable thing. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'And now you are not ashamed to think of those words and you do not respect—" (52c9-52c10)

[ii] In original: "state"

LS: "Speeches." Speeches.

Mr. Reinken: "Speeches."[24]

LS: You see—ya.

Mr. Reinken:

> "logoi[iii] and you do not respect us, the laws, since you are trying to bring us to naught; and you are doing what the meanest slave would do, since you are trying to run away contrary to the compacts and agreements you made with us that you would live in accordance with us. First then, answer this question, whether we speak the truth or not when we say that you agreed, not in word, not in speech,[iv] but by your acts, to live in accordance with us." What shall we say to this, Crito? Must we not agree that it is true?"
> *Crito*: We must, Socrates. (52c10-52d10)

LS: Now Socrates returns here to the injustice which he would do to the laws by breaking his covenant with them. The only reason why Socrates is obliged to stay in prison is that covenant, because the other is that he contradicts his speech. And at that time he gave himself airs; that makes him ridiculous if he contradicts himself in this way, but this is not an obligation proper. Yes?

Student: Well, the example just brought up of the slave implies that the slave somehow had an agreement with his master, and if the slave ran away—

LS: No, he doesn't say that there is an agreement between the slave and the master. This is a rhetorical argument that he is doing something very lousy, what the lousiest slave would do: run away. And a decent slave would not run away, that's the implication. Of course, quite a few slaves ran away, especially during the Peloponnesian War, you know, and this was most deplorable from the point of view of the owner and also from the laws. But whether an impartial observer could have blamed the slave for running away, because what the original trader was paid for the slave did not constitute an obligation of the slave, because one could very well question, and people in Plato's and Socrates's time did question, whether slavery can be reconciled with any notion of justice. Yes.

Student: But in that case, it says that you[25] would be acting like the meanest slave, running away against your agreement and compact, against the agreement and compact, which sort of implies that Socrates—

LS: No, but he doesn't know—you do what the lowest slaves would do, but there is no direct connection between the action of the slave and violation of compact on the part of the slave. By running away you violate a compact—you, Socrates, violate a compact—and therefore you do

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[iii] In original: "words"
[iv] "not in speech" is an addition made by Mr. Reinken.

something very, very despicable, and you act as despicably as a low slave. But he does not link up the lowness of the action of the slave with *his* violation of the compact. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: "Are you then," they would say, "not breaking your compacts and agreements with us, though you were not led into them by compulsion or fraud, and were not forced to make up your mind in a short time, but had seventy years, in which you could have gone away, if we did not please you and if you thought the agreements were unfair?" (52e1-52e7).

LS: Ya. Now force and fraud, that is here implied, cannot bind anyone, i.e., a compact. That is very clearly stated at the beginning of Rousseau's *Social Contract* when he discusses the social contract as such, but the thought itself is of course much older than Rousseau, and we have it here. The whole argument of the *Crito* reminds of Rousseau, but there is this fundamental difference: Rousseau's doctrine of the social contract is based on the natural equality of men. Now, Socrates does not accept that. On the contrary, he argues on the assumption of inequality. But this creates a difficulty because if men are by nature unequal, may not the one who is by nature superior use force or fraud against a man who is by nature inferior? For example, in the case of madmen is the most obvious point. This is the argument of the *Republic*. Here is another reference to Socrates's old age, as we have seen, and again the question: What if he were 40 or 30? Would this not materially affect the decision? Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'But you preferred neither Lacedaemon nor Crete, which you were always saying are well governed, nor any other of the Greek cities,[v] or of the foreign ones—" (52e 7-53a 1)

LS: "Barbarian," the barbarian ones.

Mr. Reinken: "'or the barbarians,[vi] but you went away from this city less than the lame and the blind and the other cripples. So much more than the other Athenians were you satisfied with the city and evidently therefore with us, its laws; for who would be pleased with a city apart from its laws?'" (53a 1-53a 7)

LS: "Without laws."

Mr. Reinken: "'a city without[vii] laws? And now you will not abide by your agreement?'" (53a 6-53a 8).

LS: Now let us stop here. Socrates is said to have praised Sparta and Crete as being—here, the Greek word *eunomeisthai* has [a] double meaning. First, to possess good laws, and b) to practice these laws, to put them into effect, you know, to be lawabiding in general. And also to possess good laws—you can also be lawabiding if the laws are bad, obviously. Now did Socrates ever say of Athens that it *eunomeisthai*, that it possesses good laws and puts them into practice, as

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[v] In original: "states"
[vi] In original: "or of the foreign ones"
[vii] In original: "apart from its"

Sparta or Crete did? Was not Socrates wholly uninterested in the laws as such? There are two passages in the *Apology* of which we must think here: 20e8 following, you know the passage when he makes a distinction between Chaerephon, the friend, the comrade of the Athenian demos, and the comrade of Socrates. These are two very different considerations. And [there are] other passages. Here the defective character of the conclusion from liking a city to liking its laws becomes very clear in this remark, for the city of Athens pleased Socrates, but who would be pleased by a city without laws? Well, it may very well be that is true. There must be some order. But that doesn't mean that the laws of that particular city are pleasing to one. That a polis without any laws cannot be pleasing does not mean that the laws peculiar to a given city are pleasing. Here is a point where Burnet has something to say for our benefit: These remarks here "are intended to anticipate that the objection that Socrates was induced to remain at Athens by some other attraction than its laws." (Burnet 1964, 288) There might have been plenty of attractions in Athens without its laws. Think of the many people, for example, today who like to spend some time in Paris without being attracted by the laws. [Laughter] Good. Now let us read the end of this passage.

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'And now will you not abide by your agreement? You will if you take our advice, Socrates; and you will not make yourself ridiculous by going away from the city.'" (53a7-53a10)

LS: So to make oneself ridiculous, that has to do with reputation. Socrates owes it to his reputation to stay in prison, contrary to Crito's main point. Now the issue is now settled on the ground of the compact or agreement between Socrates and the laws. And it is settled, as we see from 52d7, Crito's answer there, the issue is settled to Crito's satisfaction. But Crito is not given now an opportunity to state his agreement, as you see, and this means that the transition to a new argument, different from the one taken from the agreement between Socrates and the laws, is concealed. The new argument is prepared, however, as we shall see soon, by the reference to Sparta and Crete. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "'For consider. By transgressing in this way and committing these errors, what good will you do to yourself or any of your friends? For it is pretty clear that your friends also will be exposed to the risk of banishment and the loss of their homes—'" (53a 10-53b 4)

LS: Now wait a moment. Now here the new argument begins, which goes on to the end of the work. The new argument concerns no longer justice, but what is good for Socrates and for his friends. And the fact that we can make this distinction between the just and the good shows that the unqualified identification of the good and the just is not possible. And still less, of course, the unqualified identification of the good with the legal, and this identification of the good and the legal is after all the main point here. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'your friends also will be exposed to the risk of banishment, the loss of their homes in the city or of their property.'" (53b3-53b 5).

LS: Ya. We observed already in a way—it was not so visible as here, in commenting on 50a6 to 7, when Socrates says: If *we* were to run away. "We"—we, plural—"were to run away,"

meaning: I and you, Crito. You remember? And I said Socrates seems to imply that if Socrates breaks that law, Crito will be forced to go into exile too. Here it is now stated explicitly. Yes?

Mr. Londow: As to the distinction between the just and the good, earlier Socrates had referred to the triad of the just, the good, and—

LS: And the noble, yes.

Mr. Londow: Are we to understand—

LS: They were identified at that time.

Mr. Londow: They were identified.

LS: Yes.

Mr. Londow: Are we to understand that good now is also doing duty for noble, or this might be yet another consideration?

LS: No, good in the low sense. You know, say, for Crito it would be a great misfortune if he would lose his property, even if he loses it justly. Is this not the way in which we think most of the time? Or lose one's arm, to say nothing of one's life. Or what are the other—or go into exile. Does this not make sense that these are bad things, even if they are inflicted justly? What is punishment but inflicting some evil on someone who deserves it? But if what he gets were not an evil, it wouldn't be a punishment. Think if someone does some evil action, he were given a cruise to the Caribbean, to one of these pleasant places there: no one would call this a punishment, you know? There is an evil that is necessarily implied when we speak of punishment. I do not understand your difficulty.

Mr. Londow: Well, I'm sorry, I thought you had implied that by—that inasmuch as the just had been identified quite narrowly with the legal, that to the extent that we were now leaving consideration of the just, we were moving onto a higher plane.

LS: No, that I didn't say—a different thing.

Mr. Londow: I'm sorry, I thought you meant—

LS: Ya, that needs a long investigation, but you are nevertheless right that it is meant to be a higher plane from Plato's point of view. There is a very simple proof of that: when Plato in the *Republic* speaks of the highest piece of learning, the highest subject of learning, how does he call that? The highest thing at which we reach, after we have understood everything?

Mr. Londow: The idea of the good.

LS: The idea of the good. Now he does not call it the idea of the just; on the contrary, he says explicitly that it is higher than the idea of the just. Similarly, in the *Symposium* the fundamental

desire of man is the desire for the good, not for the beautiful, according to the speech there. Not for the beautiful but for—*erōs* is desire not for the beautiful, as we would say offhand, but the desire for generating *in* the beautiful or through the beautiful. And this generation serves the purpose of perpetuation of the species, and perpetuation is a higher form of self-preservation, a good; not something intrinsically noble or just but the basis of everything noble and just. So there is no question that the good is according to Plato the highest consideration. But this is not stated here explicitly. Here he is only clear that it is a different consideration.

Mr. London: No, well, to the extent that he had referred earlier to the triad of the good, just, and noble, I was just wondering if you might—

LS: I know, yes, Socrates or Plato say both, they make this simple equation and they deny it. And this means that we as readers or as pupils of Plato and Aristotle have to try to resolve that contradiction. Within a certain sphere they might be identical, but they are not simply identical.

Now the point which we have here to consider—incidentally, the word used here for friends is again *epitēdeioi*, not *philoi*. I mentioned this before. But the point is here very important for Crito to consider: that if Socrates goes into exile against the will of the laws, life will become unbearable in Athens for Crito and the others too. Now would Crito consider going into exile? We do not know, but it is surely a question which is forced upon us. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: *Soc*: "'both[viii] the risk of banishment and the loss of their homes in the city and[ix] of their property. And you yourself, if you go to one of the nearest cities, to Thebes or Megara—for both are well governed—will go—'" (53b 3-53b 7)

LS: I.e., possess good laws or are lawabiding. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'will go as an enemy, Socrates, to their government, and all who care for their own cities will look askance at you, and will consider you a destroyer of the laws, and you will confirm the judges in their opinion, so that they will think their verdict was just. For he who is a[x] destroyer of the laws might certainly be regarded as a destroyer of young—'" (53b7-53c4)

LS: [26]Destroyer and corrupter is the same word in Greek: *diaphthoreus*. "Who is a corrupter of the laws is a corrupter of the young." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'[corrupter of the laws] might well[xi] be regarded as a corrupter[xii] of young and thoughtless men.'" (53c 3-53c 4)

LS: This qualification is interesting. "The young and thoughtless people" are in need of legal restraint to a higher degree than old people who are not thoughtless, because they have the law in

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[viii] In original: "To"
[ix] In original: "or"
[x] "a" added by Mr. Reinken.
[xi] In original: "certainly"
[xii] In original: "destroyer"

themselves. Now there is a different argument in the *Apology*, 37c4 following, which we might read, where he also discusses the question of exile. Do you have it? 37c4.

Mr. Reinken: Bottom 131.

> *Soc*: "Shall I then propose exile as my penalty? Perhaps you would accept that. I must indeed be possessed by a great love of life if I am so irrational as not to know that if you, who are my fellow citizens, could not endure my conversation and my words, but found them too irksome and disagreeable, so that you are now seeking to be rid of them, others will not be willing to endure them. No, men of Athens, they certainly will not." (37c6-37d5)

LS: So in other words,[27] it is useless for Socrates to exchange Athens for another city because he said he would be confronted with the same problem in whichever city, to whichever city he might come. This is of course a very long question, because the mere fact that the cities are hostile to each other could work to the benefit of a fugitive from justice. Well, the greatest case, of course: that of Alcibiades, you know, who was accused of very high crimes, impiety and so on, and was received with open arms, so to speak, in Sparta because Sparta was at war with Athens. And in our time, we know very well that quite a few people who would be fugitives from justice, say, in Great Britain, would be received with open arms in, say, Czechoslovakia, and vice versa. So there was no difference in this respect between 1967 and 399. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Will you then avoid the well-governed cities and the most civilised men? And if you do—'" (53c4-53c6)

LS: Namely, these ones which you would find in Thebes and Megara. This is the point. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'And if you do this will your life be worth living? Or will you go to them and have the faith to carry on—what kind of conversation, Socrates?'" (53c 6-53c 8)

LS: Speeches.

Mr. Reinken: Speeches. "The same kind you carried on here, saying that virtue and justice and lawful things and the laws are the most precious things to men? And do you not think that the conduct of Socrates would seem most disgraceful? You cannot help thinking so." (53c 8-53d 2)

LS: You see, here again he calls the people in Megara and Thebes the most orderly or dignified of human beings. He didn't say that of the Athenians, yet it is not worth living except in cities which possess good laws and practice these laws, and with such men—I mean, men of very great orderliness. Do we find such men and such laws in Athens? That is the question which is raised but not answered. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> "Or you will keep away from these places and go to Crito's friends in Thessaly; for there great disorder and lawlessness prevail, and perhaps they would be amused to hear of the ludicrous way in which you ran away from prison by putting on a disguise, a peasant's

leathern cloak or some of the other things in which runaways dress themselves up, and changing your appearance. But will no one say that you, an old—" (53d2-53e1)

LS: Now wait here a moment. Now the alternative to going to such a wonderful city like Thebes and Megara would be to go where of course a fugitive from justice is despised because of this very fact, not because they are so lawabiding. The alternative is to go to lawless country, like Thessaly—that's almost like Dodge City in 1850. [Laughter] A lawless city far away, but the question is here, we have always to think: Is this disjunction complete? A lawabiding city nearby, in Thebes and Megara, where everyone would know the gossip from Athens, and a lawless city or country like Thessaly far away, is this complete? No.

Student: [28]There could be a lawabiding city far away.

LS: Far away. That is indeed true. Now what is an example of a lawabiding city far away? At the end of 52e,[29] Socrates is presented as having spoken of Sparta and Crete. Now Sparta was not hospitable to strangers, that was not a good place to go; but Crete was different. So why not go to Crete instead of to Thessaly, where you have good old laws, properly practiced, and no one would know what Socrates did or had done in Athens. I believe this possibility, this theoretical possibility is at the bottom of Plato's *Laws*, where not Socrates but an Athenian Stranger (and no one knows who that Athenian Stranger is)—Aristotle said it is Socrates, and Aristotle should know. [Laughter][30] One can say the most interesting point in the *Laws* is Book 10, in which new laws regarding impiety are established by that Athenian Stranger who may very well have been a fugitive from Athenian justice. [LS chuckles] Good. Now let us go on.

Mr. Reinken: "But will no one say that you, an old man, who had probably but a short time yet to live, clung to life with such shameless greed that you transgressed the highest laws? Per—" (53d 10-53e 3)

LS: Now you see again the crucial importance of Socrates's old age, a point which is emphasized time and again. Again, we raise the question: What if he had been 35? And notice here as elsewhere the matter of cause, reference to what people say, which Socrates had declared to be a wholly unworthy consideration. When he speaks of what is good in the crude, massive sense, as distinguished from what is right and wrong, and he must do that.[31] Now in the next sentence, where you left off.

Mr. Reinken: "Perhaps not, if you do not offend anyone—" (53e3-53e4)

LS: Ya, but this grief offends anyone. This is not the same as doing harm to anyone. Doing harm to anyone can perhaps be avoided by a very good and conscientious man, but hurting people's feelings, he cannot possibly avoid, because—why? Why can no man, however good and careful, how can no man avoid hurting people's feelings?

Student: Well, is it to some extent related to the debunking of the *Apology*, that if they were of his superior knowledge—

LS: Oh, no. Well, he could conceal his knowledge by talking only about the weather. No, but because of the great power of vanity, which men have. I mean, that is impossible, even if he makes himself as invisible as possible, he could not figure out whether being nice to A would not offend B and so on and so on. So that is important. But this only in passing, explaining, however, the use of this word here. Now someone else was trying to say something.

Mr. Reinken: "But if you do—" Should I go on? (53e4)

LS: Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> [32]"[Perhaps not], if you do not offend anyone; but if you do, Socrates, you will have to listen to many things that would be a disgrace to you. So you will live as an inferior and a slave to everyone. And what will you do except feast in Thessaly, as if you had gone to Thessaly to attend a banquet? What will become of our conversations about—" (53e3-54a1)

LS: "Speeches."

Mr. Reinken: "speeches about justice and virtue?" (54a1)

LS: Ya. Now in Thebes and Megara, you will suffer the indignities of a fugitive from justice because these are such stern lawabiding people. In Thessaly, you will be wined and dined while, of course, you discredit the speeches which have given you that high reputation in Athens. That is the situation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> *Soc*: But perhaps you wish to live for the sake of your children, so[xiii] that you may bring them up and educate them? How so? Will you take them to Thessaly to be brought up and educated, making exiles of them, that you may give them that blessing also? Or perhaps you will not do that, but if they are brought up here while you are living, will they be better brought up and educated if you are not with them than if you were dead? Oh yes! your friends will care for them. Will they care for them if you go away to Thessaly and not if you go away to the dwellings of the dead? (54a 1-54b 1)

LS: Well, to Hades.

Mr. Reinken: "'to Hades? If those who say they are your friends are of any use, we must believe they will care for them in both cases alike.'" (54a 12-54b 3)

LS: You see, Socrates speaks here in passing, as you see, of the exile as in itself the great evil. And the question of course would be, regarding the children: How to balance the great evil of exile against the advantage of being educated by such a father as Socrates? That would be the question of the good. We must also remember that at the end of the *Apology*, in 41e, Socrates

[xiii] "so" is not in the original but added by Mr. Reinken.

entrusts somehow the education of his sons not to his friends, but to his accusers, his condemners. This mysterious thing. Someone raised his hand—oh yes.

Student: Well, I have two questions: first of all, wouldn't there[33] just be two alternatives[34] between Socrates educating his sons in Athens and educating them elsewhere, but even after Socrates's death, would his sons still be able to live a good life in Athens, I mean, so much public prejudice has been built up against Socrates, he's probably . . . .

LS: Ya, but that could be. That is true, but in fact Socrates could not know it, but he could divine that the Athenians might repent what they have done to him. But a simpler reason, probably, is that Socrates did not think too highly of his children, so that they would need him as their educator—you know the argument the argument which he uses against Pericles and Themistocles and the other great Athenian statesman in the *Meno* and the *Gorgias*, that they were not good statesman because they did not educate their own sons properly, where the question is disregarded whether any statesman or any men of virtue could have made anything big, anything great of this inadequate material. And where the question of course naturally arises (and Plato wants us think of that) that Socrates's sons were as little distinguished, and perhaps even less distinguished, than the sons of Pericles, Thucydides, and the other statesmen mentioned there. Yes. Now let us go on here. Let us first mention this. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Soc: "'Ah, Socrates, be guided by us who tended your infancy. Care neither for your children nor for life nor for anything else more than for the right, that when you come to the home of the dead, Hades[xiv], you may have all these things to say in your own defense. For clearly—'" (54b 3-54b 8)

LS: "To those who rule there." Now Socrates, you see, returns now to the original position: the only consideration is that of justice. What had to be said about the good is finished. But now the consideration of justice is connected with or supported by the belief in Hades. Burnet makes here also a point to which we do well to listen [on] 54b5: "the Orphic doctrine of judgment after death is assumed here, as it may well be. With Crito there is no need for the reserve which was appropriate before the judges." (Burnet 1964, 291) That is a reference to the *Apology*, where Socrates says: Well, perhaps death is only a state of dreamless sleep, in contradistinction to Hades. Well, one could of course also give another reason: that Crito is more likely to believe the stories of Hades because Crito is old. That would at least be in agreement with what is said about Cephalus, old Cephalus at the beginning of the *Republic*.[35] What we must try to understand now is why Hades comes in here under the heading of justice, but after the consideration of the good. Let us go on; we will find that.

Mr. Reinken: "'For clearly if you do this thing it will not be better for you here, or more just or holier, no, nor for any of your friends, and neither will it be better when you reach Hades.[xv]'" (54b8-54b11)

LS: Ya. You see here the three considerations are distinguished: the good, the just, and the holy. And then at the end he speaks here only of the good. More precisely, for this life, considerations

[xiv] "Hades" is an addition made by Mr. Reinken.
[xv] In original: "that other abode"

of the good, the just, and the holy, the noble is now replaced by the holy, you can say for the next[309] life, only considerations of the good. For the good in the next life is the rationale—your wellbeing after death is the rationale for considering only the just, what is just and especially what is legal in this life, because the prospect of a greatest good after death gives crucial support to the consideration of justice if justice is divorced from good in this life. Does this not make sense? Why should you act justly against your interest? Is it not a good answer to that: Well, you will be rewarded for that? You will get[36] a much greater good than you have ever [had] on earth after death. This is, at least, a very famous argument. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Now, however, you will go away wronged, if you do go away, not by us, the laws, but by men; but if—" (54b 11-54c 1)

LS: You see, the laws now confirm that Socrates was unjustly condemned to death, which is very important, i.e., he was not guilty as charged but he was condemned legally. And yet no one can blame the laws because, as we know, the laws are superhuman. They are however not said to be divine. That is very important. At the beginning of the *Laws* it is[37] asserted by the Cretan and Spartan interlocutor of the Athenian stranger that the Cretan or Spartan laws are of divine origin, a claim never raised on behalf of the Athenian laws here. And later on in the First Book, in 634e, it is said that the Spartan and Cretan laws are of course good because they have been given by gods—another argument wholly absent from the *Crito*. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Now, however, you will go away wronged, if you do go away, not by us, the laws, but by men; but if you escape after so disgracefully requiting wrong with wrong and evil with evil, breaking your compacts and agreements with us, and injuring those whom you least ought to injure—yourself, your friends, your city[xvi]—'" (54b11-54c6)

LS: "Fatherland."

Mr. Reinken: "fatherland[xvii] and us—we shall be angry with you while you live, and there our brothers, the laws in Hades' realm, will not receive you graciously; they[xviii] will know that you tried, so far as in you lay, to destroy us. Do not let Crito persuade you to do what he says, but take our advice.'" (54c6-54d1)

LS: Now by escaping from prison, Socrates first breaks his covenant with the laws and then harms himself, his friends, the fatherland, and the laws. Breaking his covenant, acting unjustly is one consideration; harming, inflicting harm, is another consideration. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Be well assured, my dear friend, Crito—" (54d 2)

LS: Here he says, "my dear comrade, Crito," a combination which he had never used before. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

[xvi] In original: "country"
[xvii] In original: "country"
[xviii] In original: "for they"

> *Soc*: my dear comrade Crito, that this is what I seem to hear, as the frenzied dervishes of Cybele seem to hear the flutes, and this sound of these words re-echoes within me and prevents my hearing any other words. And be assured that, so far as I now believe, if you argue against these words you will speak in vain. Nevertheless, if you think you can accomplish anything, speak.
> *Crito*: No, Socrates, I have nothing to say.
> *Soc*: Then, Crito, let it be, and let us act in this way, since it is in this way that God leads us. (54d 2-54e 3)

LS: Ya. Now Socrates is now immune to any contradiction on the part of Crito, and he is made immune by what he seems to hear from the laws in a kind of trance, i.e., not *logos*. And that is quite contradictory to 48d8 to e1, where he had said [that] if Crito contradicts him he will do what Crito says. But this stage is now overcome. Now at the end he seems to say that the voice of the laws is the voice of the god. Whether this[38] can be written God with a capital "G" and without the article, i.e., whether that can be understood in a strictly monotheistic sense, is a difficult question. Burnet is quite sure that it must have this meaning. It is wiser to suspend one's judgment regarding this point.

Now let us then first make some concluding remarks about the *Crito* as a whole. This is a deliberation between Socrates and Crito, and it leads to the conclusion that Socrates ought not to go away from prison. What are the reasons, and how valid are they? The first are the reasons taken from justice: one ought to do whatever the laws command. Now this is clearly contradicted by the *Apology* of Socrates, where Socrates says he would not obey the laws if they were [to] forbid him to philosophize. And we may also say it is clearly contradicted by common sense. The second reason[39], which we read today, is taken from the good, what would be called a prudential or expediential consideration. In this context, Socrates's old age is of the greatest importance. He does no longer have long to live, *hôs to eikos*—I mean, according to all ordinary estimate. And this raises of course the question why, since he cannot know it; and there are all kinds of questions there. But the more obvious difficulty concerns the place of refuge. There is no proper place of refuge, as Socrates says. The lawabiding citizens detest a fugitive from justice, and the lawless cities are unworthy of Socrates because he would live there [and] would be wined and dined but it would be unworthy of him. We have to consider furthermore the twofold character of the argument taken from justice: first, absolute submission without covenant; and second, submission only on the basis of covenant. This indicates a fundamental difficulty.

But what are we to think of the whole argument? Deeds are more trustworthy than speeches. Now the deed of Socrates is that he stayed in Athens. He chose to stay. He had a *logos*, a reason for it. But is this *logos*, this reason which Socrates had for staying in Athens, identical with the whole *logos* presented in this dialogue? I suggest that these are two different *logoi*, the *logos* which persuaded Socrates and the whole *logos* presented in the *Crito*. But the two different *logoi*, Socrates's private *logos* and the *logos* presented in the *Crito*, lead to the same practical conclusion: that he will stay in Athens. One of them convinces Socrates; the other is made with a view to Crito, that they are very different people. Crito is concerned with what the people in Athens will say; that is his chief concern. And Socrates appeases Crito or gratifies him by telling Crito what Crito should tell to the people of Athens if they say to him after Socrates's death: You

are a bad friend; you permitted your friend Socrates to die instead of helping him to run away. Now the fundamental defect of the argument[40] consists in the personification of the laws, which means that they are absolutized, irrational. But *nomoi*, laws, are the works of human beings, of the kind of human beings who are ruling in the city, of the regime. They are democratic in Athens, oligarchic in other places, monarchic in other places. The legislator in a democracy is the multitude. And the multitude is frequently used in this dialogue in opposition to the knowers, and this implies already Socrates's critique of the laws as such. This critique is made quite explicit in Plato's dialogue, the *Statesman*, which is allegedly written much later. But that is of no concern to us. What is important is that this radical criticism of the laws as laws is made not by Socrates but by a stranger from Elea, southern Italy, who talks to a young man who happens to have the same name as Socrates, namely, the Younger Socrates. Plato did not go beyond that. What is behind it is this: obedience to the laws is not an absolutely valid or sacred rule but it is a wise rule of thumb, and to that extent Plato or Socrates are willing to recommend obedience to the laws unqualifiedly, especially when they talk to simplistic people.

But we must raise the further question: Can we have anything better on the political plane than wise rules of thumb? Think of freedom of speech as frequently understood today as an absolutely valid rule, and this by many liberals who are relativistic and therefore contradict themselves very strikingly. It seems to me that what Plato, and in a different way Aristotle, suggests is that there are no absolutely valid rules of actions, because of the crucial importance of circumstances. And one can easily deceive oneself about it by the use of words the meaning of which is not quite clear. There are no absolutely valid rules of action, but there are absolutely valid standards of intrinsic superiority and inferiority. That is something very different; in other words, that the truly good or the truly noble or the truly just is superior to its opposites. There are absolutely valid standards of intrinsic superiority and inferiority, but they are not absolutely valid rules of action for the very simple reason that what is the highest, say, the life of philosophy, is not always and cannot always be the most urgent. A simple example: an operation for appendicitis is nothing to boast of. Perhaps for the doctor, but surely not for the patient. It is not a noble or just or grand thing to undergo such an operation, and yet it may be more urgent at a given time than anything else. So we frequently prefer and reasonably prefer the more urgent to the higher. But one cannot make a universal rule of that because otherwise we would always prefer the urgent, or what seems to be urgent, to the highest and never find time for that.

The alternative to this view, which I believe was the Platonic-Aristotelian view, is natural law in the traditional understanding of that term. And here we have indeed absolutely valid rules of action. But the question is whether they can be universally valid, whether they can be obligatory at all times and in all respects. A good example would be birth control as viewed by Aristotle and as viewed, say, by Thomas Aquinas. The biblical tradition is of course rich in unqualifiedly valid, universally valid laws, say, the prohibition against idolatry and apostasy and so on. But these are based on divine law, i.e., a kind of positive law, not a natural law. So from this point of view the *Crito* becomes intelligible as stating in seemingly universal terms: One must obey and do whatever the laws command. And the very opposite view [is] expressed in the *Apology*. I have spoken of that contradiction before. So I think that it is of no use to begin now a discussion of Xenophon, *Memorabilia*. I will do that next time. And so we can use the short time at our disposal for discussion. Yes.

Mr. Schaefer: You were saying that[41] one can't have universally valid rules of conduct, but there are universal—

LS: Of action, ya.

Mr. Schaefer: But there are universally valid rules of what is superior and inferior.

LS: Ya, what is intrinsically superior and inferior.

Mr. Schaefer: [42]The distinction doesn't seem to be that sharp between rules of action and rules of judgment. I mean, one would have to say also that the rules for determining what's superior and inferior always have to be stated with a certain vagueness.

LS: Give an example.

Mr. Schaefer: Well, okay, if someone were trying to determine whether it was more noble to devote one's time to philosophy or to serving the city, it would certainly not be always a superior thing for men to be philosophers if the whole basis of life on which philosophy rests—

LS: Ya, all right. In other words, for individual X in a given situation. That is—

Mr. Schaefer: Let's say a man living in Nazi Germany, who had the alternative of—

LS: Yes, but this doesn't in any way contradict. The example which you give is confirmed, so to speak, or taken from, say, the end of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle raises the question in the universal form: Which is the higher form of life, the political life or the contemplative or philosophic life? And you know what his answer is: the contemplative life is the highest. Now that does not mean that under certain circumstances it would not be good for a man to dedicate himself to his city. In no way. That is[43] provided for by the distinction between the high and the urgent. But the intrinsic superiority of the contemplative life to the political life remains intact. I thought you meant somewhat more subtle questions, like that of the relation between philosophy and poetry, as stated by Plato in the Tenth Book of the *Republic* or by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, you know where Aristotle has roughly this scheme: philosophy, poetry, history writing, and the history writing is the lowest.[xix] Now it is of course infinitely better to be a historian, say, like Thucydides, than to be a "quote philosopher" like some other people. [Laughter] And that is clear. But nevertheless, the intrinsic superiority of raising the fundamental questions in their universal character, universal forms, and without any presentation in the form of a description of a given situation, political or other, this would still remain.

Mr. Schaefer: But just because one has to distinguish, let's say, different levels of philosophy, there is no clear rule for saying, you know, at what point it is better to be a historian than a philosopher—

LS: Ya, sure. Now that is easy: then one makes the necessary subdivisions and then makes a more exact statement. It is perhaps not so easy, but in principle easy. Mr. Shulsky was first.

[xix] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a 43-1451b 8.

Mr. Shulsky: Well, to go back to the first and unsubtle question that Mr. Schaefer asked, there still would seem to be a certain urgency about the highest things, too. In the case that he gave, for instance, if one was going to—

LS: In the case of?

Mr. Shulsky: The first example he gave: Should one spend one's time acting politically on the grounds that that is more urgent, or engage in philosophy? There is a certain urgency about the philosophy, too, because there's only so many years—

LS: Ya, sure. By all means. I mean, that nothing is easier than to postpone and postpone and postpone, fully agreed. That is, therefore one needs what they call judgment, which is not identical with a kind of geometric reasoning. That depends. You have to balance these things and sometimes you have to be even ruthless in postponing very urgent claims made on you by yourself or others. Yes?

Mr. Fairbanks: At the very end of the *Crito*, in which Socrates compares himself to a . . . dancer—

LS: Not himself, but the laws. But since the laws are his creatures, you are right.

Mr. Fairbanks: Well, all right. At any rate, it seems a sort of irrationality which you might not think befits a philosopher. Would you say something about that, the meaning of that passage at the very end?

LS: Yes, I think that is a kind of admission of the partly irrational character of the argument. The argument has to be irrational because it[44] is meant to convince a nice but not quite rational man, namely, Crito.

Mr. Fairbanks: But it doesn't.

LS: Socrates says: Now, I don't listen to you, and if you point out to me any defects in my argument, I don't care. I know very well these defects.

Mr. Fairbanks: But that doesn't mean that Socrates actually is so affected; this is just for the benefit of Crito.

LS: No. Socrates, after all, had some rhetorical qualities, you know, that is quite true. Well, there are some similar remarks in the dialogue called *Ion* about the effect produced by poets and the reciters of poetry, you know, which also produce a kind of trance, in which you[45] are no longer able to discern and to distinguish. And now you are the last one.

Mr. Fielding: 53e, Socrates says that to flee to a lawabiding city would require him to live as an inferior and a slave to everyone.

LS: You mean in Thessaly.

Mr. Fielding: No, no, in Thebes and Megara.

LS: Let me see, that is not in 53d. He speaks of—

Mr. Fielding: 53e.

LS: [53]e. That's still Thessaly. Thessaly. In Thessaly, there he would be wined and dined, but if he steps on anybody's toes he would be very badly treated.

Mr. Fielding: Well, that's a mistake on my part.

LS: Ya, right.

Mr. Fielding: But I believe you said that for Socrates to live as a fugitive in a lawabiding city would subject him to—

LS: That depends very much. If these people are sufficiently hostile to Athens, the fact that Athens was nasty to him would be a recommendation in the eyes of these people. I mean, think of the glaring case of Alcibiades, who had been the greatest enemy of Sparta up to that point, and when his life was in danger and he turned, ran away from the command of the Athenian navy or army in Sicily to the Spartans, and the Spartans, well, they had never seen such a man before. And he had the nerve to tell them: Yes, I was against you because you were not nice to me, but now the Athenians are not nice to me and you are at war with Athens, so I join you. And the nerve, as they would call it now vulgarly, had a terrific impact of course, because there is a kind of impudence which convinces because of its extremity. So one would have to take such cases also into consideration. That's the last question.

Student: Do you think that the comparison between Alcibiades and Socrates is really a very good one? Alcibiades went to Sparta and not only was impudent but provided real military information.

LS: Ya, sure. Ya, sure. But still, we don't know. We would have to go into the question [of] whether Socrates would not also have had some qualities useful to the people in Thebes and Megara. If you think[46] [about] the excellent advice he gave to Crito regarding protection against sycophants, you remember? And[47] Socrates was a very clever man, and he could have been quite useful to people there.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "we see already—."

[2] Deleted "But that's—."

[3] Deleted "that the philosophic—."

[4] Deleted "The duty—."

[5] Deleted "Just once you—."

[6] Deleted “there is no—.”

[7] Deleted “Does—does the obligation—can you—.”

[8] Deleted “a—.”

[9] Deleted “there—there might be a conflict then.”

[10] Deleted “Why don’t we—well, you ask—you.”

[11] Deleted “On the statement that is—if there’s no natural right, then we can’t criticize positive right.

LS: Pardon?”

[12] Deleted “Pardon?”

[13] Deleted “let’s—I mean.”

[14] Deleted “Does anyone—they.”

[15] Deleted “Utilitarian ground.

LS: Pardon?”

[16] Deleted “natural.”

[17] Deleted “is—.”

[18] Deleted “Yeah, well that—they—.”

[19] Deleted “if—I mean, the—.”

[20] Deleted “since there must be some—.”

[21] Deleted “consider—.”

[22] Deleted “R: Middle of page 183.”

[23] Deleted “yeah?”

[24] Deleted “‘speeches.’”

[25] Deleted “would be doing—was one—.”

[26] Deleted “Yeah, well, that is—.”

[27] Deleted “Socrates—the same—so.”

[28] Deleted “Could it be—

LS: Pardon?”

[29] Deleted “he had spoken of—.”

[30] Deleted “This—and the main point—.”

[31] Deleted “And the word—.”

[32] Deleted “ ‘Per if you do—perhaps.’”

[33] Deleted “be—.”

[34] Deleted “just.”

[35] Deleted “Now.”

[36] Deleted “something.”

[37] Deleted “said, that the—the—.”

[38] Deleted “can be said to be—.”

[39] Deleted “is taken—.”

[40] Deleted “is—.”

[41] Deleted “the—.”

[42] Deleted “It doesn’t seem—I mean.”

[43] Deleted “taken—.”

[44] Deleted “has to be—has.”

[45] Deleted “do no longer—.”

[46] Deleted “that Socrates was excellent—.”

[47] Deleted “there could be—.”

Leo Strauss: Now here is a question,[i] and that is the only question regarding the *Apology* and *Crito* I am able to answer[1] at this time. "If Socrates says that he is wronged by men and not by the laws, how can he interpret his staying in Athens and submitting to execution as obedience to the laws?" Now I believe this: you should be in a position to answer that question. If the laws had wronged him, then it is imaginable that one could say he does not have to submit to their wrong verdict. But he was not wronged by the laws but only by human beings, namely, by the men applying the law, by the judges, and therefore he has no right to complain about the law. Or is there more to that? Does this satisfy you?

Mr. Reinken: Because we have a constant premise that the laws will not suffer you to be wronged if they can—

LS: Yes, but how can they avoid that? By stepping down and[2] transforming themselves into the appliers of the law, and this they cannot do. So in other words, in a deeper sense of course the question remains.[3] For example, if someone is condemned to prison today for some crime, regardless [of] which, and it was an error, but an error not provable at the time because a mere assertion by the defendant that he did not steal a car but someone else did is not sufficient if all the evidence available points to him. What can you do? This is a terrible deficiency of all human justice, but which cannot be remedied. To that extent the distinction between the law and the human judges makes sense, doesn't it? I mean, the law prescribes that a man who has done such and such a thing will be punished in such and such a manner. It also prescribes that the punishers will be men appointed in this or elected in this and that way: the judges. This does not guarantee that[4] the men who are condemned will always be the guilty ones. This human error cannot be excluded. And the laws cannot be made responsible for the essential deficiencies of laws. There is a great difference between an unjust law, and which therefore should be changed into a just one, and a just law which suffers from the deficiencies of everyone. Yes?

Student: But the laws themselves can be so constructed[5] that human error can be made and give the client a chance for appeal. Which could happen—

LS: Sure, that is true. That is so; however, the difficulty—yes, all right. The Athenian laws suffered from that defect, but let us assume, as it is in this country, someone has been condemned to death. Let us take the extreme case. And he appeals all the way up, including the Supreme Court of the United States, and the Supreme Court finds no fault with the proceedings against him on the part of the lower courts. Then he will be executed. Of course, one can avoid, one can take care of this difficulty, and that is to abolish capital punishment, the only kind of punishment which cannot be remedied if it was the wrong decision, that is true. But if a man is condemned, say, to three years in jail and after the three years the true criminal will be discovered, the three years can't be given back to him, can they? So that deficiency remains in one way or the other and is an essential one.[6] The laws have built-in limitations regarding which you cannot do anything, and this cannot be held against the laws.[7] If you say we don't want to have the rule of laws but the rule of wise and just rulers, you know, the suggestion occurring in Plato and also

[i] Strauss reads and responds to a question received in writing from a student.

elsewhere—but they too can be deceived. I mean, a man may be very wise and yet be fooled regarding facts by a very clever criminal, and nothing can be done about that.

Now we completed last time our present discussion of the *Apology* and *Laws*. By present discussion I do not mean that I will ever be able to give another course of this kind. With a view to my mortality, I will hesitate to make such an implied promise. But *you* cannot, even if you have been able to understand everything you read and what I said in commenting on the text,[8] quite a few questions remain. Today there was a student with me and pointed out to me two points which I did not discuss in class, and[9] which were important to consider. One would have to devote much more time than six or eight weeks in order to give a fully adequate interpretation, even of these apparently simple Platonic works.

Now I thought I should devote the last two meetings of this course to a discussion of Xenophon's treatment of the charge against Socrates. Plato's treatment is not so simple and lucid in every point that we should not be interested in an alternative interpretation of what happened to Socrates, and regarding the question: Was Socrates guilty or innocent? —which is not the same question as: Was he a good guy or a bad guy? I hope you will permit me to make this distinction. Now[10] while it would be useful (and to some extent we shall do that) to make an as it were point for point comparison [of] Plato's defense of Socrates with Xenophon's defense of Socrates, it is also necessary to consider from the very beginning [and] take into account the difference between Plato and Xenophon altogether: between the *tropos*, manner, the character, the style, of Plato and of Xenophon. Today the manner of Xenophon, or Xenophon as a whole, is not greatly appreciated. In fact, there exists today a very powerful prejudice against Xenophon. This prejudice stems from the nineteenth century, generally speaking. There is one striking exception in the nineteenth century, and that was the English translator of Xenophon, Dakyns.[ii] And Dakyns[11] understood Xenophon in the light of a British public school boy, which is quite charming as far as it goes, and[12] Dakyns has an enthusiasm for this kind of man, which is also quite charming, but it won't do.

Now in the eighteenth century, Xenophon was still regarded very highly as one of the great writers. I mention one example: Winckelmann, in a way the discoverer of classical art,[13] compared Xenophon on the one hand and Thucydides on the other to Raphael on the one hand and to Michelangelo on the other. And now Winckelmann thought more highly of Raphael than of Michelangelo.[iii] And you see what a compliment that is. Today, if someone would dare to compare Xenophon to a painter like Raphael he would be regarded as utterly ridiculous. Now Winckelmann was of course guided in this judgment by a general notion of what is classic, and in particular classical art. And he used the formula which has become quite famous: What characterizes classical art is noble simplicity and quiet grandeur. Now[14] whether this is a true conception of classical art, and in particular whether that is a true ideal of art, has become absolutely questionable today. Who would dare to speak up today for noble simplicity and quiet grandeur? Yet, although this ideal has been questioned in various ways on various grounds, the

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[ii] Henry Graham Dakyns, *The Works of Xenophon*, 4 vols. (London: MacMillan, 1892-1897). Strauss spells his name for the students.

[iii] Strauss cites J. J. Winckelmann's *Ausgewälte Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Walter Rehm (Wiesbaden: Dieterich, 1948), 22, 37, 49, 119 in Leo Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse: An Interpretation of the* Oeconomicus (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 83-84, 84n.

reputation of men like Thucydides and Plato, to say nothing of Sophocles and Aeschylus and Homer has survived. I mean, there are quite a few people who today—in spite of the questioning of the classical ideal as Winckelmann understood it—who still admire Thucydides, Homer, and the other men mentioned. But the reputation of Xenophon did not survive; it remained by the wayside.

From this we draw the conclusion that Xenophon is particularly alien to the tastes of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The question of course is: Is the taste of the nineteenth and twentieth century and, say, especially of our generation now, better, more discriminating, than the taste of people like Winckelmann and Shaftesbury[iv] and others? Is the preference for noble simplicity and quiet grandeur inferior to other preferences? Does it not have a certain narrowness which we, with our openness to things, the other things of noble simplicity and quiet grandeur seem to have.[v] This means that one cannot take up the question of Xenophon's rank, this very limited, uninteresting historical question, without questioning the preferences now prevailing, which is, as one would say, a philosophic question. Now what is undeniable, if we approach the evidence as unprejudiced as we can, what is undeniable is that Xenophon lacks the gravity of Thucydides and of Plato, to say nothing of the tragic poets. But of course the question is: Is lack of gravity identical with being a lightweight, with being a kind of retired colonel who has a good understanding of horses and dogs and such things, but this is about all? Aristophanes too lacks gravity, but Aristophanes's reputation did not suffer as Xenophon's suffered. Yet one will say: Look at the immense imagination, however ill-employed, of Aristophanes, an imagination not inferior to that of Thucydides and even of Plato. What then is the peculiarity of Xenophon, a peculiarity so attractive, say, to Winckelmann and the eighteenth century generally and so repulsive to our age? One can say a peculiar *charis*, peculiar charm, a charm different from the charm of Plato, and Thucydides, and so on.

Now I will try to give you an—Xenophon has said something . . . . In one of his works, called the *Anabasis*, the way up, which he made with the brother of the Persian King, Cyrus, who tried to dispossess his royal brother. And Xenophon was in this army and in a way saved the Greeks after a disastrous defeat. Now Xenophon gives here a speech, which is very interesting in itself, toward the end of the Fifth Book. And at the very end of the speech he says, "it is noble as well as just and pious and more pleasant to remember the good things rather than the bad ones."[vi] That is a very characteristic utterance of Xenophon and, in a way, a key to his whole writing. The formulation[15] comes out more clearly in the Greek, because in Greek all four adjectives used end on the same syllable, *on*: *kalon te kai dikaion kai hosion kai hēdion*, so that the fact that one is a comparative and the others appositives is not so noticeable as it is in that translation. And it implies of course that it is pleasant to remember bad things as well, as we all know. To remember dangers through which we have come after we have overcome them is pleasant. But the main point is that it is noble, as well as just and pious, to remember the good things rather than the bad ones. That means in effect to conceal the bad things when you write about them, to

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[iv] Shaftesbury expresses his admiration for Xenophon in his *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), vol. 1, 169; vol. 2, 309. Also see Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 25.

[v] Strauss might have meant "our openness to things other than the things of noble simplicity and quiet grandeur."

[vi] Xenophon, *Anabasis* V. 8.26. Presumably Strauss's translation.

play them down—which is not possible unless you know them as such, otherwise how can you conceal them? Xenophon's manner is subdued, in no way loud. He avoids the depths or the heights of tragedy and comedy. He avoids also the Platonic flights to super-heavenly places; and needless to say, he avoids [the] powerful analytical statements of Aristotle. Xenophon does not avoid the appearance of the pedestrian or prosaic, and that is what people today seem to see alone, the pedestrian or prosaic; yet he is not pedestrian or prosaic. 320

[16]One of the ancient gossip writers, whose notions have come down to us, has said about Xenophon that one of his character traits was that he was bashful. We have no means of knowing whether Xenophon, as he lived in the flesh, was bashful or not. But[17] I am inclined to believe that this was originally a remark of a literary critic about Xenophon's way of writing and [it] was then applied to the man. There is a wonderful example in English literature of something similar, and that is—and you must forgive me for saying so—that is Jane Austen. I'll read to you a passage from[18] the beginning of the last chapter of *Mansfield Park*: "Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore every body, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest."[vii] Xenophon has something in common with Jane Austen.

Now to illustrate this from Xenophon himself, this remark[19] that it is noble and good and just and pious and more pleasant to remember the good things rather than the bad ones, I quote to you a passage from the same *Anabasis*, Book 2, chapter 6, toward the end, a passage to which I referred in the last course on Plato's *Meno*,[viii] Xenophon's description of Meno. Meno was a terrible character, unbelievably bad. And he had betrayed the Greeks to the Persian king,[20] especially the Greek generals, of course. Now what happened to the Greek generals after they had been betrayed was that the Persian king had them decapitated, because after all they came into his land as adventurers with his rebellious brother, Cyrus. And now when he speaks of Meno, and after having shown what a low and abominable fellow Meno was, Xenophon says about him: "Now, while his fellow army leaders, who had campaigned against the Persian king together with Cyrus, Meno, who had done the same, was not killed; but died, not like the others by decapitation, which is thought to be the quickest death, i.e., the most preferable form of death, but having lived immured, buried beneath the earth, is said to have come to such a terrible end only after a year's time."[ix] So you see, that is a nice story, that a traitor, such an abominable character, is punished by the man benefiting from his treacherous act worse than ordinary traitors. It would be wonderful if this were true. But therefore Xenophon in his wisdom says: That is *said* to have been the end of Meno. He doesn't say that Meno actually—on the contrary, Meno lived, as we know from other sources,[21] [and] was of course greatly honored by the Persian king to whom he had done such a great favor, and lived happily forever after, unfortunately. But the nice version, the pleasant, the just, the good, the pious version—is the one which Xenophon transmits. Yes?

Student: Isn't that an obvious subject of guilt?

[vii] Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, chapter 48.
[viii] Strauss taught a course on the *Meno* in the spring quarter of 1966.
[ix] *Anabasis* II. 6.29. Presumably Strauss's translation.

LS: Ya. Well, you cannot completely avoid it. Even Jane Austen cannot help speaking of—how is this called, the Lady de Bourgh. What was the name of her nephew, this pastor who gets the fortune of the family?[x] Don't you remember? Well, I don't know. Well, it is impossible to write about human beings without speaking of all kinds of vices and vicious people, but how you treat them—for example, whether they are successful or failures—that is the question. And the nice writers are those who show how wicked people get what they deserve (is this not so?) and if they perish, as they must sometimes, that they are nevertheless more noble characters than the others. I mean, Fortinbras succeeds, Hamlet fails; and yet Hamlet is not only the more interesting of the two men, he is also the more noble character. That is made clear. So in other words,[22] what you suggest would be to write simple fairy tales for special use of small children. Even there you must bring in some witch or some other terrible thing in order to make it quite interesting, otherwise it would be completely saltless. So we must not take this too literally. Good.

Now I will give you another example. I spoke of Thucydides among other men, for the very simple reason that one cannot help comparing Xenophon to Thucydides, because Xenophon wrote a continuation of Thucydides' history. There are all kinds of gossip about it, that Thucydides' daughter prevailed on Xenophon to finish that. No one knows whether that is true. But at any rate, he wrote such a continuation because Xenophon led up only to[23] about 408, 407, I forgot now the exact year, and the war lasted until 404. And then[24] quite a few things happened after the Peloponnesian War. Xenophon wrote that and gave it the title *Hellenica*, which is ordinarily translated *Greek History*, and more literally: *Things Greek*. Now this book begins as follows: "After that, not many days after, Thymochares came from Athens with a few boats."[xi] The first word of this work is "after that," *meta tauta*.[25] I'm sure that it's the only book ever written which begins with the word "thereafter." There is a story of a preacher who began his sermon with "but." [Laughter] That's much easier to understand, and much less paradoxical, than to begin a book [that way], because you would naturally have to say "but" to the conduct of quite a few of his parishioners. But to begin a book with "thereafter" seems very strange. Now of course people have an answer. They say: Well, of course it is a continuation of Thucydides, and why should he not write "thereafter"? But the trouble is that the first few pages of this book overlap with the last few pages of Thucydides, so that doesn't quite work out. But we also have to look at the end of the same *Greek History*, and this is a description of the battle of Mantinea,[xii] 362; and there Xenophon speaks first of the expectations people had from that battle. There was a terrific confusion, the Greek world then being divided chiefly between Sparta and Thebes. And[26] people expected a condition of orderliness, of absence of confusion in one way or the other after the battle. Now what does Xenophon say? "The confusion after the battle was still greater than before in Greece.[27] Let me leave it at having written up to this point. What is thereafter may be the subject of somebody else."[xiii] One can say the book begins and ends with "thereafter." Grammatically it cannot end with "thereafter," obviously, but the very word "thereafter" occurs in the last sentence.

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[x] Lady Catherine de Bourg and her nephew, Mr. William Collins, are characters in Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

[xi] *Hellenica* I. 1.1. Strauss's translation.

[xii] Strauss says "Leuctra," a battle of 371, in which Theban general Epaminondas developed tactics which he used later in the second battle of Mantinea in 362, which was between the Thebans and an alliance that included Sparta, Elea, Mantinea, and the Athenians.

[xiii] *Hellenica* VII. 5.27. Strauss's translation.

And here is a suggestion[28] conveyed by these two things, the very beginning and the very end, which can be stated as follows. What we call history is a sequence of events or situations: then, thereafter, thereafter, thereafter, thereafter. But at which situation you might look, and they are very different, one thing they will all have in common: confusion. You can call this a philosophy of history which[29] is not exhaustive but which contains one very important truth neglected by much more famous philosophers of history, namely, that there is always confusion. At the end of *Henry VI*, I believe, it must be, everything is fine: the house of York, the legitimate house, has won and the house of Lancaster has been defeated. Unfortunately, I forgot the verses, but everyone is said that now there is peace and order forever and ever. There is only one little thing, and that is the presence of the later Richard III.[xiv] There is always such a little thing there [laughter], the root of future disorder. Well, I remember the enthusiasm on VE and VJ day in 1945. Many of you will be too young to remember that, but that was also the feeling: now—that is, after the Nazis, and the Axis has been destroyed and this fundamental agreement between the United States, Chiang Kai-shek [laughter], and Stalin—what else can there be? Well, I think already at that time some people saw the little seeds of confusion, but today even the meanest capacity reading only any of the daily papers, however hopeful its persuasion may be, will know that. Good. That was another example of Xenophon.

Now as for Xenophon's deliberate avoidance of heights, I will give you an example from his Recollections of Socrates, the *Memorabilia*. In the Third Book of that work Xenophon speaks of how Socrates helped those who were desirous for the noble things (noble and beautiful are in Greek the same) and that means, of course, in the first place for honor. And then he begins with some people whom Socrates helped in this respect without even mentioning their names, nobodies. But then he gradually ascends, mentions names, and it appears when you read that that these were not very impressive. One is, for example, the son of Pericles—not the famous Pericles but his son, who is induced by Socrates to agree with a severe criticism of the policy of his father. That would be as if someone tried today to make the son of Roosevelt agree to the defects of Yalta[xv] and other things. And then we come in chapter 6 to an individual whom we all or most of us would know, namely, Glaucon, the son of Ariston, and that is a hero of Plato's *Republic*. Now Glaucon the son of Ariston tried to address the people, the assembly in Athens. "He was desirous to be a ruler of the city while he was not yet twenty years old. None of his relatives and friends could stop him, and so he was dragged from the rostrum and made himself ridiculous. But Socrates, who was benevolent to him for the sake of Charmides, the son of Glaucon" (the hero of Plato's dialogue *Charmides*) "and for the sake of Plato, Socrates alone stopped him."[xvi] And this story of Glaucon here in *Memorabilia* III. 6 is a very helpful introduction for the understanding of Plato's *Republic*; I mention it only in passing.

Now [in] the next chapter, Glaucon is higher than these people before, but Socrates was not benevolent to Glaucon for Glaucon's sake but for the sake of Charmides, the son of Glaucon, and for the sake of Plato. Chapter 7 deals therefore with Charmides, a conversation between Socrates

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[xiv] 3 *Henry VI*, V.vii.

[xv] At the Yalta Conference, which met from February 4-11 at a Russian resort town in the Crimea, the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—met to discuss the progress of WWII in the Pacific theater, and the postwar world.

[xvi] *Memorablia* III. 6.1. Strauss's translation.

and Charmides, obviously an ascent. Now we naturally expect that chapter 8 will deal with the other man who is so great that Xenophon does not even give his father's name, his patronym: just simply Plato, whereas in the case of Charmides he had given the father's name. And then we turn to chapter 8, and then we see who is spoken to in chapter 8, an individual called Aristippus, who has one thing in common with Plato: he was also a philosopher, and in every history of philosophy you will find him mentioned. What Xenophon does is this: in the Third Book, he ascends from very insignificant people who are not even mentioned by name, up to Charmides, quite a fellow—he proved to be a very vicious character, but he was a very gifted fellow. And then we would naturally expect him to come here [LS writes on the blackboard] to . . . Plato. No, he goes over to Aristippus, who is a kind of substitute for Plato, a very low substitute. And then he goes down. Afterward, he even speaks, gives the conversation of Socrates with a beautiful woman—after all, striving for beautiful women is also a striving for beautiful things, isn't it? [Laughter] And so on. And then at the end there are again very short stories, six lines long, roughly, where Socrates speaks also with nameless people about good conduct at dinner and so on and so on. Good. Now this is a characteristically Xenophontic procedure, to draw our attention to something higher but refusing to discuss this. Perhaps because he thought he could not discuss it properly. Now who in his senses would dare to write a dialogue between Socrates and Plato, even the young Plato? 323

Now we find something similar in the Fourth Book. In the Fourth Book of the *Memorabilia*, which is quite separate from the preceding three Books. Do you have it?

Mr. Reinken: Yes.

LS: Why don't you begin to read a bit.

Mr. Reinken: Page 265. "Socrates was so useful in all circumstances and in all ways, that any observer gifted with ordinary perception can say that nothing was more useful than the companionship of Socrates, and time spent with him in any place and in any circumstances."[xvii]

LS: Yes. You see how simple that all is, ya? You see—you understand that some people are repelled by this way of writing. Good. Go on.

Mr. Reinken: "The very recollection of him in absence brought no small good to his constant—" (IV.I.1)

LS: No, "even remembering him while he was not present[30] was not a little helpful to those who were accustomed to be together with him and accepting lessons from him." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "for even in his light moods they gained—" (IV. I. 1)

LS: No, no: "even in joking, no less than in being serious, he helped those who spent their time with him." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Thus he would often say he was 'in love'; but clearly—" (IV. I. 2)

[xvii] *Memorabilia* IV. 1.2

LS: "With someone."[31]

Mr. Reinken: "with someone, but clearly his heart was set not on those who were fair to outward view, but on those—" (IV. I. 2).

LS: Oh God, no: "who were beautiful [with] regard [to] the bodies, in regard to youthful bloom." Ya.

Mr. Reinken: "in body[xviii], but on those whose souls excelled in goodness. These excellent beings he recognised—" (IV. I. 2)

LS: No, no: "the good natures," ya? The good natures, namely, those who are well built by nature for virtue, whatever virtue may mean. Yes. "Now, those good natures he recognized from the fact that they learned quickly whatever they applied their mind to, and remembered what they had learned, and desired all pieces of learning, through which one can well administer one's household and the city." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "For education would make such natures[xix] not only happy in themselves, and successful in the management of their households, but capable of conferring happiness on their fellow-men and on cities[32] alike. His method of approach varied." (IV.12-IV.13)

LS: No, "but he did not approach all in the same manner." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "To those who thought themselves possessed of natural endowments—" (IV: I, 3).

LS: Ya. No, "those who believed to be good by nature, but despised to learn."

Mr. Reinken: "and despised learning, he explained that the greater the natural gifts, the greater is the need of education; pointing out that thoroughbreds by their spirit and mettle develop into serviceable and splendid creatures, if they are broken in as colts." (IV.1.3)

LS: And so on. And now[33] read the beginning of paragraph 5 only for one example.

Mr. Reinken: "To[xx] those who prided themselves on riches and thought they had no need of education, supposing that their wealth would suffice them for gaining the objects of their wishes and winning honour among men, he admonished thus." (IV.1.5)

LS: And so on. He approached them all differently. Beginning of chapter 2.

Mr. Reinken: "I will now show his method of dealing with those who thought they had received the best education, and prided themselves on wisdom." (IV.2.1)

[xviii] In original: "to outward view"
[xix] In original: "beings"
[xx] "To" not in original.

LS: Good. So in other words, he approached different people differently. And now he gives examples in the bulk of Book 4 of only[34] the last type, namely, of those who believed[35] [they had] acquired the best education and thought highly of their own wisdom, i.e., fools. And the[36] example is an individual called Euthydemus. And he deals with this individual Euthydemus and, in addition, in the central chapter there, chapter 4, with Hippias, the most foolish of the sophists. He doesn't give a single example of how Socrates dealt with those who possess good natures. That's another[37] example of the same thing I mentioned before. Let us take another example:[38] Book 1, chapter 6, paragraph 14. A conversation between Socrates and the sophist Antiphon.

Mr. Reinken: Page 73, bottom: "'That is my own view, Antiphon. Others have a fancy for a good horse or dog or bird: my fancy, stronger even than theirs, is for good friends. And I teach them all the good I can, and recommend them to others from whom I think they will get some moral benefit.'" (I.6.14)

LS: Ya. Well, "they will be benefited with a view to virtue." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'benefited with a view to virtue. And the treasures that the wise men of old have left us in their writings I open and explore with my friends. If we come on any good thing, we extract it, and we—" (I.6.14).

LS: Ya, "we select it." Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "'and we set much store on being useful to one another.'" (I.6.14)

LS: No, "'and we regard it as a great gain if we become friends to one another." Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'regard it as a great gain if we become friends to one another.' For my part, when I heard these words fall from his lips, I judged him—" (I.6.14)

LS: "Fall from his lips" is of course a sentimental addition, which is despicable, utterly despicable. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "when I heard these words[39], I judged him to be a blessed man himself and to be putting his hearers in the way of being gentlemen." (I.6.14)

LS: Good. Now "blessed": this great word is applied by Xenophon to Socrates I believe only here. It was the highest praise. And[40] as the example which he gives here is that they are reading together the treasures which the wise men of old have left behind, and when they find there something worthwhile they take it, they accept it. . . . .There is not a single example given by Xenophon of this practice of Socrates for the sake of which he called him blessed. Xenophon avoids all the heights and depths but knows them and points to them.

Let us take another example, just to get a provisional notion of Xenophon's way of writing. In First Book again, chapter 3, which is the only conversation between Socrates and Xenophon recorded by Xenophon in his Socratic writings. Now Xenophon apparently had given a kiss to

the handsome son of Crito, Critobulus, and Socrates sternly warns him against such things. Now [326] let us see. Let us begin with paragraph 11.

Mr. Reinken: Page 51. "'Poor fellow! What do you think—'" (I.3.11)

LS: Stronger, "'you miserable—'"

Mr. Reinken: "Wretch."

LS: "Wretch," yes. [Laughter]

Mr. Reinken:

> "Wretch![xxi] What do you think will happen to you through kissing a pretty face? Won't you lose your liberty in a trice and become a slave, begin spending large sums on harmful pleasures, have no time to give to anything fit for a gentleman, be forced to concern yourself with things that no madman even would care about?"
> "Heracles! what alarming power in a kiss!" cried Xenophon.
> "What? Does that surprise you?" continued Socrates. "Don't you know that the scorpion, though smaller than a farthing, if it but fasten on the tongue, inflicts excruciating and maddening pain?"
> "Yes, by Zeus[41]; for the scorpion injects something by its bite."
> "And do you think, you foolish fellow, that—" (I.3.11-I.3.13)

LS: "'You fool,'" ya.

Mr. Reinken:

> "that the fair inject nothing when they kiss, just because you don't see it? Don't you know that this creature called 'fair and young' is more dangerous than the scorpion, seeing that it need not even come in contact, like the insect, but at any distance can inject a maddening poison into anyone who only looks at it?" (I.3.13).

LS: Now that is sufficient here. But at any rate, the only character ever called by Xenophon's Socrates a fool and a wretch is Xenophon himself. Aristophanes's Socrates, who is a very boorish fellow in his conduct, uses[42] verses [like] this all the time, naturally. But Xenophon's Socrates, who is as urbane as Plato's Socrates, uses these harsh expressions only to Xenophon. These are simple examples which are meant to show that the simplistic understanding of Xenophon now prevailing is based on an amazing lack of sense . . . .

Now I will mention a few more points before we turn to our immediate subjects. The most striking difference between Plato and Xenophon (and of course we will think of Plato more than anybody else because of the connection of the two men with Socrates) is that Xenophon did not write dialogues—Socratic dialogues—proper. An exception will be mentioned later on. Xenophon did write a dialogue, but not a Socratic dialogue, and that is a work called *Hiero*, or *On Tyranny*. Now[43] the subject is tyranny, and the point which is made first in the dialogue

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[xxi] In original: "Poor fellow"

between the tyrant, Hiero of Syracuse, and the poet Simonides, a poet mentioned in the Third Book of the *Republic* especially, and in Plato's *Protagoras*.[44] And Simonides had visited Hiero and a dialogue develops. And first of all, in the first part, in the larger part, Simonides induces by some very simple tricks the old tyrant Hiero to say the worst things possible against tyrannical rule. What a terrible life a tyrant has. Just what every nice man would wish to be always true, because then there wouldn't be any tyrants. It would be as simple as that. And then, after having led up to the point where the tyrant says a tyrant can do nothing better but to cut his throat, Simonides the poet begins to comfort him, and shows him what a wonderful life a tyrant could lead and how much he could be liked by his subjects, provided he would only go about it in the right way and become a benefactor of his subjects rather than their oppressor. It is in a way a fairytale story, but it is much more than that because the premise that the tyrant had come to power by hook and by crook and has ruled originally by hook and by crook is never questioned. Only by a change of policy, which he starts when he has secured his throne,[45] can [he] become a benefactor of his subjects; and his prehistory, his criminal prehistory, is completely forgotten. That is very roughly the story of that dialogue Hiero. Here, neither Socrates nor Xenophon appear; that happened far away in Sicily and not in Athens and so. It is a very hot iron, and therefore this treatment.

Now this dialogue *Hiero* was greatly admired and used by such an amazing individual as Machiavelli. As a matter of fact, Machiavelli refers more powerfully to Xenophon than he ever does to Plato or Aristotle. This side of Xenophon is today completely forgotten. I have mentioned it more than once in print, but the prejudice of the twentieth century is so strong against Xenophon and what he stands for that I think no one except some[46] former students of mine have been willing to consider this seriously. Good.

There are other strange features of Xenophon's writings which could induce one[47] to wonder whether the present-day interpretation of Xenophon is sound. The present-day interpretation can be reduced to the simple formula that Xenophon was a rather nice, but rather foolish, retired colonel, and had this limited horizon. And one of them, a famous man, Burnet, whom we used in this course—by the way, Burnet ventured to suggest that Xenophon had[48] practically no knowledge of, of course not the slightest understanding of Socrates, but that he had also practically no knowledge of him and that he was attracted to[49] Socrates on the ground of Socrates's military reputation alone.[50] When a prejudice has become very, very powerful, then people are bound to be very stupid. In other words,[51] the originators of the prejudice must be clever men because[52] they created the prejudice, but the followers, however learned (and Burnet was a very learned man), become simply unreasonable, unintelligent. Now, he suggested that Xenophon was attracted to Socrates only because of Socrates's military reputation. And Xenophon doesn't say a word about Socrates's military reputation: that is only in Plato, partly said by Alcibiades at the end of the *Banquet*—Alcibiades was very drunk at that time—and Xenophon doesn't say a word about this. Xenophon says only Socrates was very just, which may also mean lawabiding, both in peace and on military campaign. That's all. I mean, if Xenophon had been that simplistic colonel, he would have written much more about Socrates's military feats than Plato has done.

I would like to say a few more words which should induce people to reconsider the ruling prejudice against Xenophon. This prejudice stems from roughly 1800. I[53] have not been able to

trace it completely to its originator, but[54] after 1800 it starts. In the eighteenth century, Xenophon[328] still had a very good press, for example. Now one thing which should make one think is this: the titles. When he describes the expedition against the Persian king, in which he participated and which made him so famous, the so-called *Anabasis*, which means "the way up," namely, from the coast to the interior of Asia Minor. The *Anabasis*, The Way Up, is only the subject of the first two Books. The chief content is the way down from the interior to the coast, the way down in which Xenophon was the leader. Or there is another book called *The Education of Cyrus*, a book of which Machiavelli thought highly and Machiavelli, I think, is as good a judge of what is a politically interesting book as the present-day and nineteenth-century classical scholars. [Laughter] That is *The Education of Cyrus*. The military writers, I understand, still think highly of him. The famous English military writer[55] Liddell Hart[xxii] has spoken very highly of it, I was told. Well, Gustavus Adolphus[xxiii] was a great admirer, but he also knew something of the military art. The *Education of Cyrus*: the education of Cyrus is discussed in Book 1, and it has eight Books; the other Books deal with what Cyrus did with his education, which is also the somewhat sanctionary. Even his most famous writing, the *Memorabilia*, doesn't tell you anything what it is about; that these are all recollections of Socrates is not said. It would have been easy to call it Recollections of Socrates but he calls it just Recollection. What he means, I believe, is this: his recollections *par excellence*, his memoirs *par excellence*, were not his feats in Asia Minor when he saved the Greeks from the Persians and brought them back safely to the coast, but his recollections *par excellence* is what he remembered of Socrates.

If one would survey Xenophon's work as a whole (and everything has been preserved), and I think the situation today is that there is only one of his writings, called *The Constitution of Athens*, which is regarded as spurious. All others are now again admitted to be genuine. And this *Constitution of Athens* I am by no means certain—despite the fact that everyone apart from myself regards it as spurious—that is spurious. But that leads us far and we don't have to go there. At any rate, his work as a whole has, obviously, foci. The one is Cyrus, and it doesn't make any difference whether you say the older Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, fifth century, or the younger Cyrus, a contemporary of Xenophon, who rebelled against his brother and tried to deprive him of his throne, because Xenophon himself uses the two Cyruses as exchangeable; and so why should we be more exact that Xenophon thought wise to be? So one can say then roughly that Xenophon's work has two foci: one is Cyrus, the political man, and the other is Socrates. And one can easily group all the other writings around these two works. The Socratic writings, strictly speaking, are four. These are the *Memorabilia* (how shall one translate it?—memories is not "The Things Worth Remembering"), and the *Economicus*, The *Banquet*, and *Apology of Socrates*. Xenophon, just as Plato, wrote only one book with Socrates in the title, and in both cases it is an apology of Socrates. The Recollections or Memories have sometimes been called, even in editions of the original, Recollections of Socrates. But this is an arbitrary addition on the part of the editors. Xenophon used it only, just as Plato, in the title *Apology of Socrates*.

Now the relation of these Socratic writings, which are of course most important to us here because of the connection with Plato, we may perhaps take up a little bit later. I think we should

[xxii] B. H. Liddell Hart (1895-1970), author of histories of the two world wars and military strategy.
[xxiii] Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632), King of Sweden from 1611-1632, a very successful and innovative military commander.

perhaps turn first to Xenophon's explicit treatment of the accusation of Socrates in the first two chapters of the *Memorabilia*.[56] All right, let us make a brief pause anyway and see whether there are any questions which you would like to bring up. Yes?

Student: In discussing Xenophon's method of leaving the high points out—

LS: Yes.

Student: That assumes that we have some other sources to find out what the high points are.

LS: Yes, sure.

Student: And if there was only his account then there would be no high points at all.[57] Does Xenophon presuppose that we all know Socrates, say, one or two generations hence, or are there some particular writings which Xenophon expects us to use to find the high points?

LS: No,[58] that would not be art, to presuppose something which cannot be presupposed as a matter of course. You know? It can be presupposed—say, every writer at every time presupposes that there are human beings, two sexes, good ones and bad ones, all kinds of professions, you know, and heaven above, earth below, and quite a few other things. He doesn't have to state that. But otherwise, the relevant things he would somehow state or present. You doubt that? Do you doubt that?

Student: No, I—

LS: [59]I mean, a perfect work of art should convey its message without extrinsic means. Does this make sense? Except such as go without saying: that if it is a writing, one must be able to read; or if it is a song transmitted only orally, that one has ears to hear, and so on.[60] Disregarding these things as trivial, it should be self-contained. That, I think, was the older view.[61] Now what was your question again?[62] I wish to answer it; it was a very good question.

Student: What I was wondering about is how Xenophon can assume that we'll find the high point, and know if he's pointing to them, but if they're not available to us from other sources, how—

LS: That is a good question regarding this particular point: Plato. If we do not know Plato independently of Xenophon, we couldn't see that Plato is missing, so to speak, the peak; that is quite true. That is a very special case. But otherwise, namely, Xenophon has given us all the things needed in order to judge. For instance, when he speaks of Socrates's virtues, he gives a list of them and it is our business to see whether there is anything missing. He has given us lists of other people, of the virtues of other people, say, of King Agesilaus, and Sparta, and Cyrus, and so on. And then we compare these lists of virtues and then we see[63] which virtue, if any, is absent in the case of Socrates. And then we have to think about it. Now then we will find the strange fact that the virtue of manliness, courage, however you call it, is missing in the two enumerations of Socrates's virtues occurring in the works of Xenophon. It is a fact; it's very strange, and especially if you think that Xenophon is a military man of sorts, particularly strange. But this is a

problem which must be solved.[64] I mean, the simple solution that Socrates lacked *andreia* is in no way imposed, of course, but it may very well throw some light on what people ordinarily understand by *andreia*, manliness, that Xenophon does not ascribe it to Socrates. Would it not? This would be an example. So in other words, Xenophon himself gives us the evidence we need.

Now there is another point.[65] The *Greek History* is obviously—and that was very clear to the contemporaries and clear throughout the time when Greek literature was known—it is obviously in a sense a continuation of Thucydides' history. Therefore a man who is not competent to judge of Xenophon's history and not competent to understand it fully if he does not know Thucydides. Does it not make sense? To that extent there are pointers there which give you intrinsic criteria for judging,[66] for seeing what is missing. I give you a very simple and I think also a very charming example. In the *Anabasis*—you know, that is the campaign led by Xenophon—no, in which Xenophon participated, by the Persian king's brother Cyrus against the Persian king Artaxerxes. When was it? About 403, 402 or thereabouts. Then Xenophon describes it with a formula which former generations knew by heart until the end of their lives: "from there they marched there and toil" and so on and so on. "From there they marched there." Now, and then[67] Xenophon says they came to a large and rich, wealthy city. Then a bit later he tells you they came to a city, without adding any adjectives. Now what Xenophon says by the omission of the adjectives is that it was neither rich nor big. That is[68] the subdued way in which he uses the adjectives of praise very freely and avoids the adjectives of dispraise. You have to get into the flow of this kind of writing in order to see what is not said is yet clearly pointed to. So you are protected against arbitrary reading by this very fact. As it were, he establishes [in] some way a framework, and then you have to keep this framework in mind and see what is present or absent in a given situation. Does this make sense?

Now the main point of course is, naturally, to study carefully. [69]There are passages which seem to be childish compared to the sophisticated conversations in Plato. But when you read more carefully and[70] have an understanding of Xenophon's bent, which has become an art, then you will not make this misleading comparison with Plato. Xenophon is called in the manuscripts, or in many manuscripts, the orator Xenophon. By that title he was known traditionally. That is helpful for understanding him. He is not a philosopher in the sense in which Plato and Aristotle and some lesser men were philosophers, but he is an orator of a high order, a mediator between the philosopher and the non-philosophers. That would be a better formula. Yes?

Student: Does that explain why Plato and Aristotle seem to mention Xenophon infrequently, if at all?

LS: Well, you only have to read Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, and you will see how much he used Xenophon's *Greek History*. That Xenophon is never mentioned, as far as I know, in Aristotle doesn't mean much. And Plato, of course, who does Plato mention?[71] That doesn't mean what it means today. He mentions very low, inferior figures from the entourage of Socrates. Xenophon mentions Plato only once, and in this very passage to which I referred. And that is a very high compliment, that he says Socrates was favorably disposed or benevolent to Glaucon for the sake of Charmides, the son of Glaucon, and for the sake of Plato—without even adding Plato's father's name, patronym. That's all. But that is a terrific compliment if you see the context: that this is in a way a peak toward which the work of Xenophon is arriving, and this

is too great to discuss. Whether Xenophon is not underlying one of the Platonic characters in the dialogues is a long question. I have a certain suspicion, but since I have no means of proving it, I will not state it. I believe that Xenophon occurs somewhere, but I cannot prove it, as an unidentified character in the *Philebus*—I mean, and an important character there. But it is of no use to speculate. And quite apart from the fact, does Plato ever mention Thucydides or Herodotus? No. The tragic poets he mentions. Yes. 331

Mr. Londow: In the beginning of the *Parmenides* there's a reference to Antiphon,[72] [who] either asserts [he knows] or knows of the conversation between Parmenides and the young Socrates and people go to see him—

LS: [73]Which Antiphon is that?

Mr. Londow: Well, I'm not sure, but he's taking care of his horses and he pretends not—

LS: [74]But he has turned away from philosophy to the art of horse-training and horse-riding. Ya, that would also need some interpretation, how literally is this meant. I do not know.

Mr. Londow: You don't think that's a possible reference to—

LS: No, no I don't.[75]

Now I think we should now perhaps turn then to Xenophon's explicit treatment of the charge against Socrates, which we find above all in the first two chapters of the *Memorabilia*. All right, well, I will try to translate at least the first sentence. "Many times I fell to wondering by what speeches in the world the accusers of Socrates persuaded the Athenians that he deserved death at the hand of the city. For the charge against him was about this"—not quoting literally. And then he says, "Socrates commits an unjust act by not believing the gods which the city believes, but importing other demonic things that are new or novel. He also commits an unjust act by corrupting the young."[xxiv] Now[76] if we did not have the original of the charge we would be unable to say why this is not literally the charge, but the charge has come down to us literally in Diogenes Laërtius, a later writer, and from that we see that[77] absolutely the only difference is that in the charge it is said, *hetera de kaina daimonia eisegoumenos*: leading in, bringing in other divinities which are new.[xxv] And Xenophon replaces that by *eispheron*. And I try to bring out the difference by translating that by "importing." It is a somewhat coarser expression. So but you see how strict it is: this little change, and therefore he says it was "about to this effect," the charge, not literally. Yes. Now will you go on?

Mr. Reinken: "First then, that he rejected the gods—that he did not believe the gods—"

LS: Ya,[78] the word "believe" is of course not—the Greek word is *nomizein*, which does not have the strict meaning of a credo in the Christian tradition, or . . . but which means something like "holding to be true," or you can even omit the "to be true." "Holding."

[xxiv] *Memorabilia* I. 11. Strauss's translation.
[xxv] Diogenes Laërtius, "Socrates," in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, XIX.

Mr. Reinken: "First then, that he did not hold to[xxvi] the gods the city held to[xxvii]—what evidence 332
did they produce of that? He offered sacrifices constantly, and made no secret of it—" (I.1.2)

LS: No. Well, "for he obviously sacrificed frequently at home, frequently also on the common altars of the city. And he was not unobvious in using *mantikē*, divination." Now, what did you want to say?

Student: It just seems that this translation is closer to how you rendered it when . . . .

LS: All right, give it to me. This seems to be more literal, the student says. Who made that?

Mr. Reinken: Anna S. Benjamin, Professor of Classics, Rutgers.

LS: Ya, well, because Marchant[79] does not translate it well enough, that is quite true.

Mr. Reinken: We had quite a fuss with Marchant last time.

LS: Ya. Oh, I see. Good. That was the reason why we were. Now let us see how Xenophon proves that Socrates was innocent.[80] He sacrificed frequently at home, where of course only some people could see him. But he also sacrificed frequently on the common altars of the city, and he was not unobvious in using divination. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "Indeed it had become notorious that Socrates claimed to be guided by the demonic thing.[xxviii]" (I.1.2)

LS: Ya, by this famous *daimonion*, and hence that would prove that he believes in the gods of the city only[81] with the help of some interpretation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "I think it was out of this claim[xxix] that the charge of bringing in strange demonics[xxx]—" (I.1.2)

LS: Ya, demonic things, *daimonia*. So in other words, the reference to the *daimonion* wouldn't help because the *daimonion* was itself something strange and would therefore confirm the accusation. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> Yet Socrates was not introducing new demonics[xxxi] any more than all the others who believe in divination and resort to birds, voices, omens, and sacrifices. The men who resort to divination do not think that the birds, or whatever gives

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[xxvi] In original: "rejected"
[xxvii] In original: "acknowledged by the state"
[xxviii] In original: "'the deity'"
[xxix] In original: "It was out of this claim I think"
[xxx] In original: "deities"
[xxxi] In original: "divinities"

> response[xxxii], know what is beneficial for them, but they believe that the god gives signs through this mediary[xxxiii]; and this is what Socrates believed too. Most people say— (I.1.3-I.1.4)[xxxiv]

LS: So in other words, just as others use birds as proof as sent by the gods, Socrates used his *daimonion*, his demonic thing, as something giving him divine information. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> Most people say that they are dissuaded or persuaded by birds or some such medium, but Socrates said [what] he knew to be the case: that a demonic thing[xxxv] gave him signs. Furthermore, he advised many of his companions to do or not to do something because the demonic [thing[xxxvi]] had given him a sign beforehand; the people who heeded his advice were helped, while those that[xxxvii] did not, came to repent[82] [of] it. Yet who would not agree that Socrates wanted to avoid appearing as a fool or impostor to his friends? He[83] [would have] been considered both, had he made supposedly divine prophecies which then made a liar of him. Obviously, he would not have made prophecies if he had not believed them true. In matters of prophecy, who would respect someone other than a god? And if Socrates paid respect to gods, he must have thought that gods exist. (I.1.4-I.1.5)[xxxviii]

LS: You see the easy transition from god in the singular to gods in the plural. But I would, if I had to translate that into English,[84] write god always with a small "g" in order[85] not to suppose in Xenophon something like biblical monotheism without any evidence. Yes. A god, in other words.[86] "To these who would a man make believe such things except to a god? And if he trusts gods, how can he help not believing in gods?"[xxxix] Obviously. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "Another way he had of dealing with intimates[xl] was this: if there was no—" (I: I, 6).

LS: The word is the same as we had in the *Crito*, *epitèdeioi*.

[xxxii] In original: "responses"
[xxxiii] In original: "these mediaries"
[xxxiv] *Recollections of Socrates and Socrates' Defense Before the Jury of Xenophon*, trans. Anna S. Benjamin (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965)
[xxxv] In original (Benjamin): "divinity"
[xxxvi] In original: "divinity"
[xxxvii] In original: "who"
[xxxviii] *Recollections of Socrates and Socrates' Defense Before the Jury of Xenophon*, trans. Anna S. Benjamin (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965).
[xxxix] Presumably Strauss's translation.
[xl] In original: "intimate friends"

Mr. Reinken: "if there was no room for doubt, he advised them to act as they thought best; but if the consequences could not be foreseen, he sent them to the oracle to inquire whether the thing ought to be done. Those who intended—" (I.1.6-I.1.7).[xli]

LS: So in other words, now he gives the rationale of Socrates's concern with divination. Because in some things the ordinary arts cannot know, and in a way that is the most important thing, to anticipate what Xenophon will say. Say, a carpenter can tell you how to make a good, and stable, and good-looking table. That is[87] human knowledge. But whether when you buy it you will not have some misfortune as a consequence of that buying, that goes obviously beyond the art of the carpenter. And how can you know that, whether it is wise to buy that table? The[88] best carpenter in the world cannot tell you that. Only someone who could know the future; that means the gods. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "Those who intended to control a house or a city, he said, needed the help of divination. For the craft of carpenter, smith, farmer or ruler, and the theory of such crafts, and arithmetic and economics and generalship might be learned and mastered by the application of human powers; but the deepest secrets of these matters—" (I.1.7-I.1.8).

LS: Ya. No, "the greatest things in these."

Mr. Reinken: "the greatest things in these the gods reserved to themselves; they were dark to men." (I.1.8)

LS: "The greatest things," he means the success. Even if you have mastered the strategic art and are a general like Napoleon I, that doesn't guarantee success, as is proven by some battles and his end. And the success, how can you guarantee the success?[89] And that needs a special art going beyond that of the strategist, and that is the art of divination. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "You may plant a field well; but you know not who shall gather the fruits: you may build a house well; but you know not who shall dwell in it: able to command, you cannot know whether it is profitable to command—" (I.1.8)

LS: Command an army, namely.

Mr. Reinken: [command] an army: "versed in statecraft, you know not whether it is profitable to guide the city: though, for your delight, you marry a pretty woman, you cannot tell whether she will bring you sorrow: though you form a party among men mighty in the city, you know not whether they will cause you to be driven from the city."[xlii] (I.1.8-I.1.9).

LS: Is this not true? And don't you need therefore an art which makes you wise regarding the success? And what art would that be except the art of divination? Now there were oracles, therefore, all over Greece, and one could go to them. But one could also, if one was so lucky as Socrates was, have an oracle in himself, the *daimonion*, which told him what to do and what to avoid. This proves that Socrates believed in the gods of the city, yes? [Laughter]

[xli] Mr. Reinken has resumed reading from the Loeb edition.
[xlii] In original: "state" instead of "city" throughout the passage.

Mr. Reinken: "If any man thinks that these matters are wholly within the grasp of the human mind and nothing—" (I.1.9)

LS: [90]"Those who believe that nothing of these things is demonic," meaning, going beyond human understanding, ya? But falls—

Mr. Reinken: Oh, I didn't catch that extra line: "that these matters are . . . nothing of these is demonic, that man, he said, is demonic.[xliii] But it is—" (I.1.9).

LS: Now, [the] meaning here is mad.

Mr. Reinken: "But it is no less demonic, mad,[xliv] to seek the guidance of heaven in matters which men are permitted by the gods to decide for themselves by study—" (I.1.9)

LS: "Which the gods have given to man to know." For example, if you try to go to an oracle in order to find the solution of a mathematical problem, it is absurd, because the gods have given that to man. But[91] if you ask the question: Should you marry girl A or girl B?, that's a matter properly brought before the oracle because there is no science or art of marriage counseling as exact as carpentry or other things are. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "to ask, for instance, Is it better to get an experienced coachman to drive my carriage or a man without experience? Is it better to get an experienced seaman to steer my ship or a man without experience? So too with what we may know by reckoning, measurement or weighing. To put such questions to the gods seemed to his mind profane. In short—" (I.1.9)

LS: No, even worse.

Mr. Reinken: Blasphemous.

LS: Ya, almost blasphemous. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "In short, what the gods have granted us to do by help of learning, we must learn; what is hidden from mortals we should try to find out from the gods by divination: for to him that is in their grace the gods grant a sign." (I.1.9)

LS: So now that is a perfectly orthodox view, it seems, and so he has proven that Socrates believed in the gods of the city as everyone did. And then he makes a very strange transition in the next sentence.

Mr. Reinken: "Moreover, Socrates lived ever in the open—" (I.1.10)

[xliii] In original: "that these matters are wholly within the grasp of the human mind and nothing in them is beyond our reason, that man, he said, is irrational."
[xliv] In original: "irrational"

LS: Ya,[92] he was always in the open. Why is it necessary to add this remark? Well, maybe he led[336] a double life. And that is what he did in the open. He consulted the oracles or his own oracle, but he had a private life in which funny or fishy things happened, and therefore Xenophon in his wisdom says he was always in the open. And then of course one has to consider whether that can be literally true. After all, he must have some time for sleeping and for other things; there has to be private—he needs privacy and so on. Yes. Good.

Mr. Reinken: "for early in the morning he went to the public promenades and training-grounds; in the forenoon he was seen in the market; and the rest of the day he passed just where most people were to be met: he was generally talking, and anyone might listen. Yet—" (I.1.10).

LS: Ya, now again here: "and he spoke most of the time." That is also important. He could always be in public and always be silent. Then you wouldn't be any wiser about what he thought. But to be always in the public and talk always, then nothing can be hidden about the man. The defects of this argument are obvious, I take it, not only because Xenophon says he was talking most of the time—after all, sometimes, at least when he listened to what others said, he was silent. But the difficulty remains, of course,[93] the many hours in which he was in private. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "He was generally talking, and anyone might listen. Yet none ever knew him to offend against piety and religion in deed or word. He did not even discuss that topic so favoured by other talkers, 'the Nature of the Universe'—" (I.1.10-I.1.11)

LS: No, "what most others talked," not only talkers, but most other men; meaning that's a funny thing, namely?

Mr. Reinken: "as most of the others did: and he did not speculate as to what the cosmos as the sophists call it was like or by what laws each part of the heavens came into being. Furthermore, he—"

LS: Now let us stop here. So in other words, now[94] he begins with a serious proof that Socrates was a very pious man because he never conversed about the nature of all things,[95] [which is] not quite a good translation here. [96]Everyone talks, most people talk about the nature of things. Only Socrates avoids this dangerous hot iron completely. Yes. And so then he goes on to show that Socrates felt that the study of nature is something intrinsically foolish, and therefore he cannot be accused of having been impious by studying the nature of things, ya? We have to stop here, and we will continue at this point next time.

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "in this—."

[2] Deleted "becoming—."

[3] Deleted "But still it is not—."

[4] Deleted "you know, the—the guilty, you know, or the—the—."

[5] Deleted "that they can take into account—human—."

[6] Deleted “And that is, therefore—I mean.”

[7] Deleted “The only—.”

[8] Deleted “there—.”

[9] Deleted “which were seriously—.”

[10] Deleted “in—it is—.”

[11] Deleted “was a kind—.”

[12] Deleted “he has an enthusiasm—.”

[13] Deleted “said—.”

[14] Deleted “this—.”

[15] Deleted “is—.”

[16] Deleted “the—.”

[17] Deleted “it is—.”

[18] Deleted “the last chapter.”

[19] Deleted “this;” moved “remark.”

[20] Deleted “And now—after—have—.”

[21] Deleted “lived—.”

[22] Deleted “that it would—that would be—.”

[23] Deleted “what—which—which year was that—which year was that?”

[24] Deleted “something—.”

[25] Deleted “I believe—.”

[26] Deleted “what would—and.”

[27] Deleted “But I—.”

[28] Deleted “if—which—by—.”

[29] Deleted “may not be—which.”

[30] Deleted “yeah? Was helpful—.”

[31] Deleted “yeah.”

[32] The Loeb translation reads “states.”

[33] Deleted “later on he speaks of how he—.”

[34] Deleted “of.”

[35] Deleted “having.”

[36] Deleted “man—and the.”

[37] Deleted “there is the same thing—.”

[38] Deleted “I, VI—.”

[39] The Loeb translation reads “when I heard these words fall from his lips.”

[40] Deleted “what—and.”

[41] The Loeb translation reads “To be sure.”

[42] Deleted “this—.”

[43] Deleted “I—.”

[44] Deleted “Now—.”

[45] Moved “he.”

[46] Deleted “students.”

[47] Deleted “to take him—.”

[48] Deleted “no—.”

[49] Deleted “attracted by.”

[50] Deleted “Now. That was one of these things—well—of—for—when—.”

[51] Deleted “as—no—the—.”

[52] Deleted “they caused—.”

[53] Deleted “have not been completely—.”

[54] Deleted “around—.”

[55] Deleted “I forgot his name—.

R: Liddell Hart.”

[56] Deleted “But is it—.”

[57] Deleted “Are there any—.”

[58] Deleted “No. That would be a very—how shall I say it? That—.”

[59] Deleted “Or is this certain—no, there is—.”

[60] Deleted “Regard—.”

[61] Deleted “And, therefore—.”

[62] Deleted “You know—let us continue—.”

[63] Deleted “what—.”

[64] Deleted “The solution—of course—.”

[65] Deleted “They hate—.”

[66] Deleted “of—.”

[67] Deleted “they say—that he—say—.”

[68] Deleted “you know, that is—.”

[69] Deleted “which, I mean, Xenophon—there are passages.”

[70] Deleted “get—.”

[71] Deleted “Of, I mean—there was—that—that—.”

[72] Deleted “Either assert—I can’t remember.”

[73] Deleted “Yeah.”

[74] Deleted “Yeah, no, he is—yeah, no.”

[75] Deleted “no, I don’t—well, I don’t see—no.”

[76] Deleted “this is—we—.”

[77] Deleted “it is—that the—the only difference, it is absolutely—.”

[78] Deleted “the word ‘believe’ is, of course not—.”

[79] Deleted “is—is—.”

[80] Deleted “yeah?”

[81] Deleted “with some—.”

[82] Deleted “at.”

[83] Deleted “had.”

[84] Deleted “I would.”

[85] Deleted “not to make—.”

[86] Deleted “Yeah, ‘to these who would.’”

[87] Deleted “that is knowledge.”

[88] Deleted “carpenter—the.”

[89] Deleted “It—.”

[90] Deleted “yeah.”

[91] Deleted “whether—.”

[92] Deleted “but he—yeah.”

[93] Deleted “the quite—.”

[94] Deleted “comes—.”

[95] Deleted “about which most people—that is a—a—I mean—I mean—.”

[96] Deleted “most people”

Session 16: December 13, 1966

Leo Strauss: I would like to[1] discuss a bit more Xenophon's contribution to our question. I spoke of his fate since roughly 1800, and which leads us to the question: What is the peculiarity of Xenophon, that while he was regarded as a classic like the other classics of his age, he alone has ceased to occupy that exalted position, whereas Plato, Thucydides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and so on have not been degraded in this way. Now I tried to explain to you his peculiarity by beginning with a remark occurring at the end of the Fifth Book of his *Anabasis*, in which he states that one should be as silent as possible about evil[2] as distinguished from the good things, that it would be more just, pious, noble,[3] and more pleasant to remember the good things rather than the bad ones. One must enlarge that. What is characteristic or peculiar to Xenophon is the greatest possible silence on the greatest things also. And I gave you some examples from the *Memorabilia*: his allusion to the fact that there was a man called Plato without ever saying anything more about that; and his refusal to present a dialogue between Socrates and a man of good nature as distinguished from men of inferior natures. So in other words,[4] [the reason] Xenophon has such a bad press today is the fact that he is so pedestrian compared with all the other classics, but[5] I tried to show that his pedestrianism is only apparent.

Now in order to make clear—I used for a moment the reference to Jane Austen to make clear the peculiar charm and the peculiar limitations of Xenophon. Yet there is another fact which equally reveals Xenophon's peculiarity, and that is something very different from Jane Austen. This very wicked man called Machiavelli quotes Xenophon more frequently than Plato and Aristotle and Cicero combined. This obvious fact—I mean, you can easily establish it by means of an index; if you don't wish to check the index, which sometimes is better. So as I say, Machiavelli does this. How come? Now, he refers to two Xenophontic writings: *The Education of Cyrus* and the *Hiero*. *The Education of Cyrus* is the presentation of what Xenophon regarded as the greatest empire builder of whom he had ever heard, the founder of the Persian Empire. The *Hiero* is a dialogue on tyranny: how to become a tyrant and how to rule tyrannically after you have occupied this exalted position.

Now the *Hiero* is especially interesting and revealing in this respect—more obvious, at least. The *Hiero* is a dialogue between a wise man, the poet Simonides, and the tyrant Hiero of Syracuse. The poet comes to Syracuse and asks Hiero how it feels to be a tyrant, and Hiero explains to him in winged words that nothing is more terrible than to be a tyrant, and that[6] the wisest thing a tyrant could possibly do is to hang himself.[7] In other words, it's a desperate situation. But Hiero of course does not hang himself, and that is partly due to the fact that Simonides shows him an alternative: how you could live very happily precisely because you are a tyrant. And then he develops the possibilities which are open to a tyrant and nobody else. What is ordinarily overlooked is this: that in this final statement of the poet Simonides, it is taken for granted that this man then living entirely for the wellbeing of his subjects came to power in a wholly illegal manner, having killed and robbed thousands of his subjects, of having become guilty of all kinds

of the severest punishments on the part of gods and men—and yet, after he has done all these things, if he is prudent, then he can live perfectly happy. So that is a very Machiavellian proposal, although it is not visible because Xenophon always uses this Jane Austenian style: we don't see the wicked things. So he plays with an extreme unsavory possibility more than Plato does, and that's the reason why Machiavelli used him. I will give you another example from Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*. Do you have it here?

Mr. Reinken: Yes.

LS: It's in chapter 20, paragraph 21 following. That is a dialogue on farming, and farming is presented here as the only occupation worthy of a true gentleman because (that is a story not only in Xenophon of course, but a very common view) the farmer is not dependent, or does not exploit human beings. He exploits, if one can even use that word, the soil but not human beings, and also he is not dependent on human beings in the way in which other men are. [8]And the alternatives, like crafts, and trade, and so on, are morally inferior. That's the basis of the whole thing. Now let us continue in paragraph 21.

Mr. Reinken:

> "'These, then, are the evils that crush estates far more than sheer lack of knowledge. For the outgoing expenses of the estate are not a penny less; but the work done is insufficient to show a profit on the expenditure; after that there's no need to wonder if the expected surplus is converted into a loss. On the other hand, to a careful man, who works strenuously at agriculture, no business gives quicker returns than farming. My father taught me that and proved it by his own practice. For he never allowed me to buy a piece of land that was well farmed; but pressed me to buy any that was uncultivated and unplanted owing to the owner's neglect or incapacity. "Well farmed land," he would say, "costs a large sum and can't be improved;" and he held that where there is no room for[9] improvement there is not much pleasure to be got from the land: landed estate and livestock—'" (XX.21-XX.23)

LS: Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

> "'must be continually coming on to give the fullest measure of satisfaction. Now nothing improves more than a farm that is being transformed from a wilderness into fruitful fields. I assure you, Socrates, that we have often added a hundredfold to the value of a farm. There is so much money in this idea, Socrates, and it is so easy to learn, that no sooner have you heard of it from me than you know as much as I do, and can go home and teach it to someone else, if you like.'" (XX.23-XX.25)

LS: Socrates is a teacher of that, ya?

Mr. Reinken:

> "'Moreover, my father did not get his knowledge of it at secondhand, nor did he discover it by worrying[i]; but he would say that, thanks to his love of husbandry and hard work, he had coveted a farm of this sort in order that he might have something to do, and combine profit with pleasure. For I assure you, Socrates, no Athenian, I believe, had such a strong natural love of agriculture as my father.'
> "Now on hearing this I asked—" (XX.25-XX.26)

LS: The "I" being Socrates, ya?

Mr. Reinken:

> "'Did your father keep all the farms that he cultivated, Ischomachus, or did he sell when he could get a good price?'
> "'He sold, of course,' answered Ischomachus, 'but, you see, owing to his industrious habits, he would promptly buy another that was out of cultivation.'
> "'You mean, Ischomachus, that your father really loved agriculture as intensely as merchants love corn. So deep is their love of corn that on receiving reports that it is abundant anywhere, merchants will voyage in quest of it: they will cross the Aegean, the Euxine, the Sicilian sea; and when they have got as much as possible, they carry it over the sea, and they actually stow it in the very ship in which they sail themselves. And when they want money, they don't throw the corn away anywhere at haphazard, but they carry it to the place where they hear that corn is most honored[ii] and the people prize it highly,[iii] and deliver it to them there. Yes, your father's love of agriculture seems to be something like that.'
> "'You're joking, Socrates—'" (XX.26-XX.29) [Laughter]

LS: Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> "rejoined Ischomachus; 'but I hold that a man has a no less genuine love of building who sells his houses as soon as they are finished and proceeds to build others.'
> "'By Zeus[iv]; and I declare, Ischomachus, on my oath that I believe you, and that all men believe to love whatsoever they believe to be benefited by.'"[v] (XX.29)

LS: Ya, thank you for that. "That all men naturally believe to love whatever they believe will profit them." You see the complicated subjective element entering into what people

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[i] In original: "much thought"
[ii] In original: "valued"
[iii] In original: "most highly"
[iv] In original: "Of course"
[v] In original: "that all men naturally love whatever they think will bring them profit."

ordinarily call love. They must believe that they will be benefited, and that will make them love. But they believe to love that. That is of course a very questionable love, if it is linked up[10] with a calculation of benefit. Now the point here is this: that at the end of the *Oeconomicus* here, another extreme possibility [is] not seriously considered by a perfect gentleman, namely, [the] combination of agriculture with trade. He makes a maximum concession to the agricultural ideal by saying he must do farming. You know, he must do farming. But the farms are used as objects of trade after having been properly treated. That is fundamentally the same as the deal regarding tyranny in the *Hiero*. Yes.

Now I think we began last time to read the first chapter of the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon's defense of Socrates against the charge. Perhaps we [will] finish this section now and turn then to a more general discussion again. Now, we have begun to read up to paragraph 10 following. Now the point up to this was[11] that Socrates of course always sacrificed publicly to the gods of the city, [and] that he also believed in divination, for his divination with the help of his *daimonion* is not fundamentally different[12] from divination by means of birds' flights and other things. That was utterly the point. And now beginning at paragraph 10.

Mr. Reinken: "Moreover, Socrates lived ever in the open—" (I.1.10)

LS: [13]And hence there could not have been a Jekyll and Hyde situation, you know, that he led two different lives at the same time. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: He was right out in the open. . . . .

LS: [14]Ya. [Laughter]

Mr. Reinken: "for early in the morning he went to the public promenades and training-grounds; in the forenoon he was seen in the market; and the rest of the day he passed just where most people were to be met: he was generally talking, and anyone might listen." (I.1.10)

LS: So in other words, there was no privacy whatever. Of course that was true during the day,[15] but in the night of course he slept. That's a simple answer. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "Yet none ever knew him to offend against piety and religion in deed or word. He did not even discuss that topic so favoured by most[vi] talkers, 'the Nature of the Universe'—" (I.1.10-I.1.11)

LS: Ya. Now that is quite interesting: "by most," he says. And then most people are concerned with the nature of the universe. That doesn't make much sense. But he must have implied [that] most people suspected, in the way in which Socrates was suspected. Yes?

[vi] In original: "other"

Mr. Reinken: "and avoided speculation on the so-called 'Cosmos' of the sophists[vii]—" (I.1.11)

LS: [16]Literally, on "what the sophists call 'Cosmos.'"

Mr. Reinken:

> "how it works, and on the laws that govern the phenomena of the heavens: indeed he would argue that to trouble one's mind with such problems is sheer folly. In the first place, he would inquire, did these thinkers suppose that their knowledge of human affairs was so complete that they must seek these new fields for the exercise of their brains; or that it was their duty to neglect human affairs and consider only things divine? Moreover, he marveled at their blindness in not seeing that man cannot solve these riddles; since even the most conceited talkers on these problems did not agree in their theories, but behaved to one another like madmen. As some madmen have no fear of danger and others are afraid where there is nothing to be afraid of, as some will do or say anything in a crowd with no sense of shame, while others shrink even from going abroad among men, some respect neither temple nor altar nor any other sacred thing, others worship stocks and stones and beasts—" (I.1.11-I.1.14)

LS: So these are examples of ordinary insanity, these kinds of extremism, yes? And now we find also the—now he gives an example of madness or insanity in physiology. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "so is it, he held, with those who worry with 'Universal Nature.'" (I.1.14)

LS: Ya, "those who worry about"—yes. "Worrying" is a literal translation. Who have nothing else to worry [about], but something which is in no way subject to their worrying, to any human worry. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Some hold that *What is* is one, others that it is infinite in number: some that all things are in perpetual motion, others that nothing can ever be moved at any time: some that all life is birth and decay, others that nothing can ever be born or ever die." (I.1.14-I.1.15)

LS: You see, these are also the extreme views which are mad views. And as such, by their being extremes, they point to a view in the middle. Now what is the view? That is of course not spelled out by Xenophon, but it is clearly implied. Now what is that middle view? Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Well, literally, that there a few things which—

LS: Not a few, but there are a finite number of beings. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Which move sometimes.

[vii] In original: "professors"

LS: No, no; some beings[17] do not change and others change, yes? And there are beings which come into being and perish, and others which do not come into being and perish. That is the implication. That is a description of what the Socratic view of the cosmos is, and that is confirmed by Plato as well as Aristotle, although Aristotle doesn't ascribe it to Socrates but it's fundamentally the same view. Underlying, for instance, the Platonic doctrine of ideas [is that] there are not infinitely many ideas, but a finite number; and there are some beings which are changed, changing, coming into being and perishing, and others which don't, namely, the ideas. So[18] Socrates's cosmology is a conscious return from the madness of his predecessors to sanity. And that means that this view, which is here sketched within these few lines, is the view which common sense has of the whole and which is only not properly spelled out by common sense. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Nor were those the only questions he asked about such theorists. Students of human nature, he said—" (I.1.15)

LS: No, "of human things." That is a real crime. The study of human things is not the study of human nature. For example, wealth and poverty are human things; by studying them you do not study directly, at least, human nature. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "Students of the human things, he said, think that they will apply their knowledge in due course for the good of themselves and any others they choose. Do those who pry into heavenly phenomena imagine that—" (I.1.15)

LS: Now, literally, "the divine."[19]

Mr. Reinken: "the divine things[viii]—" (I.1.15)

LS: Ya.

Mr. Reinken: "the divine things[ix] imagine that, once they have discovered the laws by which these are produced, they will create at their will winds, waters, seasons and such things to their need? Or have they no such expectation, and are they satisfied with knowing the causes of these various things[x]?" (I.1.15)

LS: Ya, that is[20] one of the very few references in classical literature to the problem of what we now call technology, say, exploitation of the knowledge of nature for human purposes. And it is here rejected, of course, as something quite absurd. One doesn't study winds, and rains, and seasons in order to make them. It is understood one cannot possibly make them—beyond human power. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Isn't there a middle ground? That is, you could study winds to know to get out of their way.

[viii] In original: "heavenly phenomena"
[ix] In original: "heavenly phenomena"
[x] In original: "phenomena"

LS: Yes[21], that[22] would [surely] have been admitted. Think only of navigation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> Such, then, was his criticism of those who meddle with these matters. His own conversation was ever of human things. The problems he discussed were, What is godly, what is ungodly; what is beautiful, what is ugly; what is just, what is unjust; what is prudence, what is madness; what is courage, what is cowardice; what is a city,[xi] what [is] a statesman; what is government, and what is a governor;—these and others like them, of which the knowledge made a "gentleman," in his estimation, while ignorance should involve the reproach of "slavishness." (I.1.16)

LS: So in other words, Socrates's piety is here proved by the fact that he did not pry into the divine things and limited himself entirely to the study of human things. But this study of human things has a peculiarity: it always takes on the form of the question "what is?" as you see from the questions here indicated. And this "what is?" question, which occurs in all Platonic dialogues and which implies the so-called doctrine of ideas to which he alludes in a way by the criticism in paragraph 14—this is the peculiarity of the Socratic philosophy. So that we get this directly from Xenophon if we read him with a little bit of care. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "So, in pronouncing—" (I.1.17)

LS: So Xenophon has now proved to everyone's satisfaction that Socrates was pious, because among other things he was not a student of nature. Now let us first finish, if you don't mind. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "So, in pronouncing on opinions of his that were unknown to them it is not surprising that the jury erred: but is it not astonishing that they should have ignored matters of common knowledge?" (I.1.17-I.1.18)

LS: Literally, "things which all knew."[23]

Mr. Reinken:

> things which all knew? For instance, when he was on the Council and had taken the counsellor's oath by which he bound himself to give counsel in accordance with the laws, it fell to his lot to preside in the Assembly when the people wanted to condemn Thrasyllus and Erasinides and their colleagues to death by a single vote. That was illegal, and he refused the motion in spite of popular rancour and the threats of many powerful persons. It was more to him that he should keep his oath than that he should humour the people in an unjust demand and shield himself from threats. For, like most men, indeed, he believed that the gods are heedful of mankind, but with an important difference; for whereas they do not

[xi] In original: "state"

believe in the omniscience of the gods, Socrates thought that they know all things, our words and deeds and secret purposes; that they are present everywhere, and grant signs to men of all that concerns man.

I wonder, then, how the Athenians can have been persuaded that Socrates was a freethinker, when he— (I.1.18-I.1.20)

LS: No, no: "that Socrates was not sober," or "sound regarding the gods." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

unsound on the gods[xii], when he never said or did anything contrary to sound religion, and his utterances about the gods and his behaviour towards them were the words and deeds[xiii] of a man who is truly religious and deserves to be thought so.

No less wonderful is it to me that some believed the charge brought against Socrates— (I.1.20-I.2.1).

LS: And so on. Now let us stop here.[24] Now, he goes over to the second part of the charge, the corruption charge. As for the corruption charge, according to Xenophon, there were only a few who believed that he corrupted the young. What about the impiety charge discussed hitherto? Beginning of Paragraph 20.

Mr. Reinken: "the Athenians—" (I.1.20)

LS: [25]In other words, this was the general opinion: that he was guilty and whereas that he was guilty of impiety but not of corruption, of corrupting the young. He devoted about four pages to the refutation of the graver charge, which was much more plausible; and he devotes, say, about twenty pages to the lesser charge, of the truth of which very few Athenians were convinced. That is very strange. Now furthermore, when you look at the discussion of the impiety charge, the first part of the charge, Xenophon presents the situation questionably: everyone knew that Socrates was a pious man; one could see him bringing sacrifices on the public altars every day; he had no private life of his own.[26] His soul was as clear and visible to everyone, like that of a dog: when you look at his eyes, you see all his thoughts which cross his mind, and the same would be true of Socrates. But then at the end, in paragraph 17 following, he says there was only a single fact which was universally or generally known regarding Socrates's piety, and that was that he had kept that oath in the trial of the generals. Now that Socrates opposed vicious and illegal action does not of course prove that he believed in the gods which the city believed in. So in other words, Xenophon, while refuting the first part of the charge, shows us at the same time the weakness of his own refutation.

And then there is another point toward the end[27] when he makes Socrates speak about the gods knowing everything: the things spoken, the things done, and the things silently deliberated. He later on, in the last paragraph, as you see, speaks only of what Socrates said and did, and of course not of the silent deliberations, i.e., the thoughts. And this

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[xii] In original: "a freethinker"
[xiii] In original: "actions"

question of what Socrates thought about the gods remains therefore entirely open. Yes. Now we make here a stop before we turn to a few passages of the second chapter, i.e., of the discussion of the second part of the charge. Mr. Shulsky, you were one of those who wanted—

Mr. Shulsky: What would be the status of Socrates's investigation of human things if one of the questions he asks is: What is piety? Doesn't that lead him to prying into divine things as well?

LS: Yes, I'm afraid so, ya. So the line cannot so easily be drawn if someone says he will simply study only moral and political subjects and be entirely indifferent to the natural things. You can state it also in a different way (it's fundamentally the same thing), as in the *Republic*. You want to find out what justice is, and then you have to know something about the soul; and the soul is from the Greek point of view, of course, something which is by nature and[28] even more by nature, one could say, than stones and other things. Yes?

Mr. Schaefer: Well, could you explain something about the fact that he says on page 5 here that it would be mad to consult the gods about something about which human beings are able to make judgments, whereas a few paragraphs later he says that the gods give signs to men about all human affairs, implying that it would be wise—

LS: You mean in what we read last time.

Mr. Schaefer: No, what we just read now.

LS: [29]Why don't you tell me the paragraph.

Mr. Schaefer: Paragraph 9. He says, "they're mad if they consult oracles on questions about which the gods—"

LS: Yes, that is true. I mean, in other words, in the first step of the argument it is said there is a certain sphere where men can know the arts, the ordinary arts. And yet there is connected with that a kind of questions which go beyond human knowledge, the answers to which go beyond human knowledge, namely, the event, the result. You plant trees according to the rules of the art of tree-planting. That doesn't guarantee success, and therefore that depends on *tyche* whether you are successful—on chance, whether it's successful or not. And here only omniscient beings can give you advice, and therefore you have recourse to divination.

Mr. Schaefer: But my point is that in the first case, there he says that there are certain things about which[30] it would be mad to consult the gods, whereas in paragraph—

LS: Ya, sure,[31] if you would try to solve an arithmetical problem and would go to the oracle in Delphi, that would be mad, ya?

Mr. Schaefer: Then in paragraph 19 he says that the gods give signs to men about all human affairs, implying that—

LS: But to what extent in paragraph 19.

Mr. Reinken: "that they are present everywhere, and grant signs to men of all that concerns man." (I.1.19)

LS: Wait a second.

Mr. Reinken: "of all the human things.[xiv]" (I.1.19).

LS: Paragraph 19?

Mr. Reinken: 19, end.

LS: Well, of course that would not apply to arithmetic, but farming would come under that heading in a way, because it is a human concern. Ya?

Mr. Schaefer: But in other words, if the gods give signs to men about the human concerns—

LS: Yes, that would be another difficulty—that, properly elaborated would be another difficulty.

Mr. Schaefer: Would you elaborate it in other words?

LS: [32]In other words, there is the sphere of divine knowledge and there is the sphere of human knowledge;[33] it is a clear line. Say, the outcome, the results, of human actions are not knowable because chance intervenes, and therefore you have recourse to oracles. But then on reflection there are some difficulties. To some extent one can predict what might—for example, if someone wastes his inheritance and is always to be found in the company of gamblers and similar[ly] unsavory people, you reasonably predict a bad end. Now[34] it might happen that when everything falls down, some uncle dies who leaves him another inheritance which saves him and which[35] perhaps you could not have known. So these predictions have always[36] [this] character if nothing wholly unexpected happens. But prediction within limits is possible, of course, so it is not so easy to draw the line between what men can foresee and what they cannot foresee.

Mr. Schaefer: Why does Socrates call it blasphemous to consult the gods about things which human beings can decide if he also says that the gods give signs to men about all human affairs? I mean, that implies that the gods make information available—

LS: Ya, but it is possible to say that the human things of which he speaks at the end of paragraph 19 are the things not subject to *technai*, to arts. And to the extent to which they

[xiv] In original: "all that concerns man"

are subject to *technai* it would be an insult to the gods to ask them, say, to test their knowledge of arithmetic or geometry. That would be surely an impious act. Yes?

Mr. Fielding: Socrates, at the end of paragraph 15, also seems to cast aspersion upon knowledge which is knowledge only, but then[37] Xenophon goes on to say that he is concerned with the question: "What is?" It would seem that there might be a relation between—

LS: No, there are other—especially in *Memorabilia*, Book 4, chapter 7 where he discusses to what extent according to Socrates one should study arithmetic, astronomy and so on. Now the view here suggested is this: don't worry about things which are none of your business, especially since the gods don't like it if you try to find out their secrets by studying them, that's clear. But concentrate on what is your business as a human being,[38] i.e., on the human things. That is simple and has been said often by all kinds of people, and there is only one slight difference between this very frequently-said thing and what Socrates says, namely, Socrates's concern with the human things is a concern with their "what they are"—to use a much-misused later expression, with the *essence* of the various human things. And this changes the picture completely because by raising this "what is" question, you are compelled to restore in a new manner and on a new basis the doctrine of nature. If you ask "Who is that?"—say, who knocks at the door or so, that does not lead beyond ordinary human preoccupations. It's frequently a matter of idle curiosity. But if you raise the question "What is man?"—a question which is not stated here in this form but only implied, then you cannot possibly say "What is man?" without distinguishing him from non-man. And you have to know non-man in order to know man, and so on. So in other words, the whole position of Socrates which is sketched here leads to the consequence, which is much more directly visible in Plato, that the Socratic return to sanity leads to a *physiologia* of a new kind, prepared in various ways by some earlier thinkers. But still the fundamental difference, and radical difference, remains.

Mr. Fielding: But is not that direction or that redirection in the direction of knowing rather than—

LS: [39]Well, the concern with human things in the sense as a concern with the essential character of the human things is at first glance humanly relevant, whereas the concern with the heavenly bodies or with what is beneath the earth is at first glance not humanly relevant. Does it not make sense? Because these questions, as is stated here (What is just? What is unjust? and so on), are important for man's conduct of his life, so that this knowledge is manifestly relevant for action, whereas the knowledge of heavens, at first glance, has no relevance for human action. It's not our business.

Mr. Fielding: But the presentation is ambiguous. I mean, it might be suggested that those things which man can know, that is, human knowledge, are precisely concerning human things; but one does not necessarily study human things because he wishes to make men better but because perhaps he simply wishes to have knowledge.

LS: Yes, but if you think for one moment, you see that this doesn't work. For example, to know what human excellence is cannot but affect your own life, your own judgment of yourself, even if you say you begin the study of[40] [it] only with a theoretical interest. I mean, can you reach some judgment on what you should do without[41] feeling that you ought to do it? You ought to do it? Is this possible?

Mr. Fielding: Well, perhaps there's another way of putting it: that one might regard the theoretical search as being that which one should do.

LS: That is another possibility that[42]—sure, ultimately that coincides. But[43] since you took it from his side, I take it, I assume it is impossible to make a study of man's excellences without some practical consequences flowing from that study. And to that extent it is relevant for life, for action, what you study apparently in a purely theoretical intent. The opposite is of course also true, that if you are guided only by the practical concern with becoming a gentleman, you have to know what a gentleman is; you have to engage in that theoretical pursuit of what is a gentleman in order to guide your action to conduct your life properly. And that is the basis for this distinction. There are objects which are not immediately relevant for man's goodness, and objects which are. And Xenophon presents Socrates as being concerned with the human things because this is surely necessary for man, and [44]however much they might wish to keep men down, even the gods cannot deny that man acts within his proper sphere by trying to find out about the human things. I don't see the difficulty which you have.

Mr. Fielding: Well, it does seem that the endeavor is still at least of twofold character, and that one may be emphasized at the expense of the other.

LS: No,[45] I think that the objection which was made before is: Can this line be drawn in this way, even granting that there is a primary necessity for the study of human things as distinguished from other things? Are you not necessarily drawn into the study of all things if you try to understand the human things? That is the question, that alone. But that there is a primary reasonableness to the demand that the proper study of mankind is man and not serpents or worms, or even horses and dogs, that always makes[46] sense. But the question is: Must you not in a certain manner know even serpents and dogs and horses in order to know man? That is the same problem as indicated here.

Mr. Fielding: But Aristotle will later distinguish theoretical and moral virtue and—

LS: But would he still deny that? Aristotle makes the distinction on this basis: what you have to know of the soul in order to understand the moral virtues in the way in which the morally virtuous man has to know them. You don't have to have a very precise knowledge of the soul; and a very rough knowledge, which he sketches, would be perfectly sufficient. But is it not necessary then also to raise the question: What about the place of moral virtue as Aristotle understands it in the economy of human life? And then you have to go beyond the horizon of the morally virtuous man [to come again] to that of the wise man[47]. That within certain limits these distinctions are tenable, and especially in the form in which Aristotle made them, I would be the last to deny. But are they

ultimately tenable, even and especially for Aristotle? That would be the question. For example, at the end of the *Ethics*, when he discusses the relation of the morally virtuous man to the wise man,[xv] and then the question ultimately arises, which Aristotle does not explicitly raise but which is implied in what he says: To what extent is moral virtue an ingredient of theoretical wisdom? Then you are already in deep waters. And Aristotle, who also had something in common with Jane Austen, does not go into this question, although if you read him with normal care you are confronted with this question. Good. Now let us turn to what Xenophon does regarding the second part of the charge, the corruption charge. Now we cannot possibly read this very long statement, but let us look only at a few passages, chapter 2, paragraph 9, beginning.

Mr. Reinken: Page 15, bottom. "But, said his accuser, he taught—" (I.2.9)

LS: "But by Zeus."

Mr. Reinken: [48]"But by Zeus, said his accuser, he taught his companions to despise the established laws by insisting on the folly of appointing public officials by lot, when none would choose a pilot or builder or flautist by lot, nor any other craftsman for work in which mistakes are far less disastrous than mistakes in statecraft. Such sayings, he argued, led the young to despise the established regime[xvi] and made them violent." (I.2.9)

LS: And so on and so on. So you see, here he begins now to quote the accuser. There is now a consensus of scholars to the effect that this is not the true historical accuser but some sophist, Polycrates, who wrote a pamphlet just for the fun of it many years after Socrates's death, and Xenophon replied to that. Well,[49] we don't know that. We don't know that, and it is utterly uninteresting. The interesting point is that Xenophon here, in replying to the second part of the charge, quotes the accuser whereas in replying to the first part of the charge, the gravest part of the charge, he never quotes the accuser. Now therefore we do not know which evidence, if any, the accusers used in order to prove that Socrates was impious, whereas we get some inkling of what the accusers said regarding Socrates's corrupting the young.

Now let us read the next point made by the accuser, in paragraph 12. You see here, of course, Xenophon does not refute this division. Socrates criticized the established constitution, the established political order, by questioning the wisdom of choosing officials by lot. And this of course went to the root of the Athenian regime, and this mustalways be considered if we try to understand the fate of Socrates. Now go on: paragraph 12 and 13, please.

Mr. Reinken: "But, said his accuser.[xvii] Among the associates of Socrates were Critias and Alcibiades; and none wrought so many evils to the city.[xviii] For Critias in the days of the oligarchy bore the palm for greed and violence: Alcibiades, for his part, exceeded all

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[xv] *Nicomachean Ethics* X.5.X-8.13.
[xvi] In original: "constitution"
[xvii] In original: "his accuser argued thus"
[xviii] In original: "state"

in licentiousness and insolence under the democracy. Now I have no intention of excusing the wrong these two men wrought to the city[xix]; but I—" (I.2.12-I.2.13)

LS: Now literally, "I will not apologize if these two men did anything wrong to the polis." He doesn't even grant that, Xenophon. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "but I will explain how they came to be with Socrates. Ambition was the—" (I.2.13-I.2.14).

LS: Yes, and so on. And then he gives a plausible account of why they were attracted by Socrates and why Socrates was repelled by them. But let us read later on in the same chapter, paragraph 38, when he comes to speak of the two men again in detail.

Mr. Reinken: 28?

LS: Ya, "of what manner the being together, of Critias to Socrates, was and so how they behaved towards each other has been said." Yes? "And I would say."

Mr. Reinken: Ah, 38, bottom. So "I venture to lay it down," page 31,

> that learners get nothing from a teacher with whom they are out of sympathy. Now, all the time that Critias and Alcibiades associated with Socrates they were out of sympathy with him, but from the very first their ambition was political advancement. For while they were still with him, they tried to converse, whenever possible, with prominent politicians. Indeed, there is a story told of Alcibiades, that, when he was less than twenty years old, he had a talk about laws with Pericles, his guardian, the first citizen in the city[xx].
> "Tell me, Pericles," he said, "can you teach me what a law is?" (I.2.39-I.2.41).

LS: You see, that's one of these famous Socratic questions: What is a law? And not meaning this or that law regarding drunken driving or whatever it may be, but law as law, these famous universal or abstract questions. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "'Certainly,' he replied." (I.2.41)

LS: [50]Pericles, I mean, a man the stature of which I suppose you all have a notion. Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "'Then pray teach me.'" (I.2.41)

LS: "'By the gods.'" Ya?

[xix] In original: "state"
[xx] In original: "state"

Mr. Reinken: "'by the gods, teach me. For whenever I hear men praised for keeping the laws, it occurs to me that no one can really deserve that praise who does not know what a law is.'" (I.2.41)

LS: Ya. Is it not an important point? How can he know that he is lawabiding if he does not know that he abides by laws? And how can he know that, if he does not know what a law is? A good point, if very impractical. Yes. [Laughter] Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> "Well, Alcibiades, there is no great difficulty about what you desire. You wish to know what a law is. Laws are all the rules approved and enacted by the majority in assembly, whereby they declare what ought and what ought not to be done."
> "Do they suppose it is right to do good or evil?"
> "Good, by Zeus[xxi], young man,—not evil."
> "But if, as happens under an oligarchy, not the majority, but a minority meet and enact rules of conduct, what are these?"
> "Whatsoever the sovereign power in the State, after deliberation, enacts and directs to be done is known as a law."
> "If, then, a tyrant,[xxii] being the sovereign power, enacts what the citizens are to do, are his orders also a law?"
> "Yes, whatever a tyrant[xxiii] as ruler enacts is also known as a law."
> "But force, the negation of law, what is that, Pericles? Is it not the action of the stronger when he constrains the weaker to do whatever he chooses, not by persuasion, but by force?"
> "That is my opinion."
> "Then whatever a tyrant[xxiv] by enactment constrains the citizens to do without persuasion, is the negation of law?"
> "I think so: and I withdraw my answer that whatever a tyrant[xxv] enacts without persuasion is a law."
> "And when the minority passes enactments, not by persuading the majority, but through using its power, are we to call that force or not?" (I.2.42-I.2.45)

LS: Let us say "violence, or not."[51]

Mr. Reinken:

> "Everything, I think, that men constrain others to do 'without persuasion,' whether by enactment or not, is not law, but violence.[xxvi]"

[xxi] In original: "of course"
[xxii] In original: "despot"
[xxiii] In original: "despot"
[xxiv] In original: "despot"
[xxv] In original: "despot"
[xxvi] In original: "force"

> "If follows then, that whatever the assembled majority, through using its power over the owners of property, enacts without persuasion is not law, but violence[xxvii]?'" (I: II, 45).

LS: So in other words, the democracy is fundamentally tyranny, it amounts to that. And how does Pericles retort to that?

Mr. Reinken:

> "Alcibiades," said Pericles, "at your age, I may tell you, we, too, were very clever at this sort of thing. For the puzzles we thought about and exercised our wits on were just such as you seem to think about now." "Ah, Pericles," cried Alcibiades, "if only I had known you intimately when you were at your cleverest in these things!" (I.2.46). [Laughter]

LS: Now[52] this brief one page on this great subject "what is law" is of course interesting enough in itself, especially if you consider the fact that there is no dialogue of Plato, with the exception of the *Minos*, now generally regarded spurious, which is devoted to the question: What is law? Now here in Xenophon, of course not Socrates raises this dynamite-like question, "What is law?" but the naughty Alcibiades. But it so happened that the naughty Alcibiades was connected with Socrates at the time when he raised the Socratic question: What is law? So here Xenophon says, while denying it, to what extent Socrates was responsible for the corruption of Alcibiades because this argument here, to which Pericles, the representative of democratic Athens, had no reply. Therefore he had to dig deeper or to choose whatever he liked, because this was not greatly inferior, theoretically at any rate, to what Pericles suggested.

I mention in passing, since we have read the *Crito*, that the question "what is law?" is of course never raised in the *Crito*, which makes things much easier for Socrates in replying to Crito. Now let us look at another passage in chapter 2, paragraphs 49 to 50. There are many more things; I wish we had the time to read the whole second chapter. Let us read paragraphs 49 to 50.

Mr. Reinken:

> "But,: said his accuser, "Socrates taught sons to treat their fathers with contempt: he persuaded them that he made his companions wiser than their fathers: he said that the law allowed a son to put his father in prison if he convinced a jury that he was insane; and this was a proof that it was lawful for the wiser to keep the more ignorant in gaol." In reality— (I.2.49-I.2.50)

LS: No, no, in jail, in "fettering" him, ya? And that is of course a reference to Zeus' fettering of Kronos, ya? Yes.

Mr. Reinken:

[xxvii] In original: "force"

> In reality Socrates held that, if you clap fetters on a man for his ignorance, you deserve to be kept in fetters[xxviii] yourself by those whose knowledge is greater than your own: and such reasoning led him frequently to consider the difference between Madness and Ignorance. That mad men should be kept in prison was expedient, he thought, both for themselves and for their friends: but those who are ignorant of what they ought to know deserve to learn from those who know it. (I.2.50)

LS: Ya. Now apply this to the father-son relation. Then you get the situation [that] if you have the wise son and the ignorant father: Is[53] the unwise father not under an obligation to listen to his wise son? The question [is] comically presented by Aristophanes in the relation between Strepsiades and Pheidippides in the *Clouds*. Well, there are many more things. We[54] simply do not have the time.

I would like to return to a more general question regarding Xenophon now. And that is, in the first place: What is the meaning of this work, the *Memorabilia* as a whole? The title can be translated by Recollections, not "Recollections of Socrates," as it is frequently said, because there is nothing of Socrates in the title "Recollections." Xenophon's recollections par excellence are his recollections of Socrates, and not his recollections of his own great deeds in Asia Minor when he saved the Greeks and brought them back to Greece. That he calls The Way Up, *Anabasis*. And only the recollection of Socrates are *the* recollections of Xenophon. Now let us[55] look at the beginning of chapter 3 of the First Book [of the *Memorabilia*], because the first two chapters are devoted to the refutation of the charge and then a new subject begins. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "In order to support my opinion that he benefited his companions, alike by actions that revealed his own character and by conversation[xxix], I will set down what I recollect of these." (I.3.1)

LS: "Whatever I may recollect." And this is a kind of title,[56] superscription of all what follows: Socrates as a benefactor of his companions. But what is the word, the Xenophontic expression, for such benefactions? Let us turn to the very end of the *Memorabilia*. Paragraph 11, the last paragraph.

Mr. Reinken: Bottom 357. "This was the tenor of his conversation with Hermogenes—" (IV. 8.11)

LS: Ya, all right. The next part.

Mr. Reinken: "All who knew what manner of man Socrates was and who seek after virtue continue to this day to miss him beyond all others, as the chief of helpers in the quest of virtue." (IV.8.11)

LS: Literally, "as the most useful[57] with a view to the concern with virtue." Yes?

[xxviii] In original: "gaol"
[xxix] In original: "by his conversation"

Mr. Reinken:

> For myself, I have described him as he was: so religious that he did nothing without counsel from the gods; so just that he did no injury, however small, to any man, but conferred the greatest benefits on all who dealt with him; so self-controlled that he never chose the pleasanter rather than the better course; so wise that he was unerring in his judgment of the better and the worse, and needed no counsellor, but relied on himself for his knowledge of them; masterly in expounding and defining such things; no less masterly in putting others to the test, and convincing them of error and exhorting them to follow virtue and gentleness. To me then he seemed to be all that a truly good and happy man must be. But if there is any doubter, let him set the character of other men beside these things; then let him judge. (IV.8.11)

LS: What Xenophon says here at the end is: look at the other characters which I, Xenophon, have described elsewhere (Cyrus and whoever they were) and compare that with Socrates and then you will see that my judgment is correct. But we read this passage for another reason, namely: What is the name for the virtue through which a man is most helpful, most beneficial, to others, to men he comes in contact with?

Student: Benevolence.

LS: No, no, no.

Student: . . . .

LS: No.

Mr. Reinken: He did no injury, but conferred the greatest benefits on all—

LS: Yes, justice. Justice. Now, so the theme of the *Memorabilia* is Socrates's justice, except for the first two chapters, which refute the charge. But what does it mean to refute the charge? What is the formula of the charge? How does it begin?

Mr. Reinken: Socrates is an unjust man.

LS: Ya, commits acts of injustice. So in other words, by refuting it you show also that Socrates was just, if in a narrower sense. So we can say that the *Memorabilia* as a whole are devoted to presenting the justice of Socrates. But Xenophon wrote three other Socratic writings: the *Oeconomicus*, the *Banquet*, and the *Apology of Socrates*. Now in order to see how they are related, we only have to look at the beginnings of these three works. Read the beginning of the *Oeconomicus*.

Mr. Reinken: "I once heard him discuss the subject of estate management in the following manner." (*Oeconomicus*, I.1)

LS: Ya, "discussing;" literally, "having a conversation." Ya? *Dialegomai*, speaking. Look at the beginning of the *Apology* first.

Mr. Reinken: "I have always considered the manner in which Socrates behaved after he had been summoned to his trial, as most worthy of our remembrance; and that, not only with respect to the defence he made for himself, but—" (Xen., *Apol*.1).[xxx]

LS: No, that is—he[xxxi] misses the decisive point: It seems to me worthy to remember regarding Socrates also how, when he was called, when he was accused he deliberated about the defence and the end of his life. So here, deliberation; in the case of the *Oeconomicus*: speaking. And now what about the *Banquet*, the beginning?

Mr. Reinken: "I am of opinion, that as well the sayings as the actions of great men deserve to be recorded, whether they treat of serious subjects with the greatest application of mind, or, giving themselves some respite."[xxxii]

LS: No, where does he get "the sayings"? "It seems to me[58] that the actions of gentlemen, not only those which are done with seriousness, are worthy of being remembered, but also those done in a jocular or playful manner." So here we have the jocular deeds of gentlemen, and Socrates was one of these. So Socrates's jocular deed; more generally, Socrates's deed. That this deed of Socrates is only jocular is interesting and has all kinds of consequences. Now when you look at a passage which we read before, in *Memorabilia* Book 1, chapter 1, paragraph 19, you see that Xenophon makes here, as he does elsewhere, the following distinction: the things said; the things done; and the things deliberated, silently deliberated. You have the plan of his Socratic writings. The *Oeconomicus* being the Socratic conversation, the Socratic logos written by Xenophon; the *Symposium* containing the deed of Socrates, what he did on the occasion of this banquet and in a jocular manner; and finally the *Apology*, Socrates's silent deliberation about the defense to be made and about the end of his life, in the *Apology*.

There is another point which one might mention regarding the other Socratic writings, the three other ones. Well, in order to see however the Socratic writings properly, one must overlook all the writings of Xenophon. And then one will see that they have two foci. [LS writes on the blackboard] The one is of course Socrates, and that means primarily the four Socratic writings of which I spoke. The other is Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, the subject of the largest work of Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*. But Xenophon in his quaint way occasionally identifies this famous Cyrus with the Cyrus of his time, who tried to depose the then-Persian king, Artaxerxes. He identifies somewhere in the *Oeconomicus* the two Cyruses, so that Xenophon's *Anabasis*, which describes the

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[xxx] Xenophon, "The Defense of Socrates Before His Judges," in *The Whole Works of Xenophon*, trans. Sarah Fielding (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle-Chestnut St, 1845), 511-515, 511.
[xxxi] Presumably the translator.
[xxxii] Xenophon, "The Banquet of Xenophon," in *The Whole Works of Xenophon*, trans. James Welwood, MD, 1. (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle-Chestnut St., 1845) 603-62, 603. Hereafter cited in text.

ascent from the western coast of Asia Minor towards the interior and the way back, which was much more difficult, under the guidance or leadership of Xenophon, that also deals with Cyrus—if another Cyrus, [that of the] Persian Empire. And there are some other writings which are somehow in between these two foci, like the Greek History, *Hellenica*,[59] the smaller writings on dogs and horses, and the constitution of Athens—no, *The Constitution of Sparta*. I must not say "the Constitution of Athens" because that is now one of the sacred things that you must not say[60] is a writing of Xenophon: this was written by an individual called the Old Oligarch. You may have heard this occasionally in my courses. Xenophon could not have written it because that's not Xenophon's style. And this refers to a situation in Athens antedating Xenophon's maturity by some decades, or more or less. As if Xenophon could not have written like a somewhat grouchy, landed proprietor living at that time, when he was—when Xenophon himself was still a young boy. Well, I don't see any intrinsic impossibility in that. But it of course would deprive the book very much of its value for writing a statistically correct history of Athens, you know, if it had any such frivolous implications, and therefore no one considers that possibility. [Laughter] Good.

Now these are the two foci, and one does not understand Xenophon at all if one does not see his Socrates with a view to the Cyrus presented as the greatest representative of the political life. After all, however highly you might think of Pericles, Pericles did not found something like the Persian Empire, and you would have to wait for Alexander the Great[61] [to] find a Greek doing that. Therefore it is necessary, and vice versa. Of course you cannot understand Xenophon's Cyrus, the man of the greatest political achievement, unless you measure him by the standard Xenophon erects in his description of Socrates.

Now there is another little point which I might mention since I have spoken of frivolity. The four Socratic writings [LS writes on the blackboard] *Memorabilia*, and the *Oeconomicus*, and the *Banquet—Symposion*, and the *Apology*. Now[62] the *Symposion*, *Banquet* takes place in the house of Callias, a man from a very old, distinguished family, himself a rather ridiculous individual. And the [*Banquet*][xxxiii] is a conversation between Socrates and Callias' brother, Hermogenes. Callias is known to some of you from the *Protagoras*, from Plato's *Protagoras*, in whose house the conversation takes place. And now the *Oeconomicus*[63] is a discussion chiefly with a man called Ischomachus. And now we know this Ischomachus cannot be identified because the name Ischomachus was quite common, and while there is reference occasionally to the father's name of Ischomachus—you know the ordinary way to designate an Athenian, the father's name is never given. So we don't know which Ischomachus. But in one of the orators (I believe it is Andocides; I do not remember exactly) we are told a strange story about a certain Ischomachus, and who was the father-in-law of Callias.[xxxiv] So that I believe one of the principles keeping these relatively minor Socratic writings together is some reference to this distinguished, if somewhat ridiculous, Athenian house. And [this is] the reason why I am inclined to believe what Andocides, or whoever that orator was, says about that particular Ischomachus who was a father-in-law of Callias. When you read the

[xxxiii] Strauss says "Apology," in error.

[xxxiv] Andocides, *On the Mysteries*, 124-127. In *Minor Attic Orators*, vol. 1, trans. K. J. Maidment (Loeb Classical Library) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941).

Oeconomicus, you will see the first subject taken up there when Socrates presents himself as a teacher of the economic art. Now economic art means of course not merely the art of getting money; it means the art of managing the household: the slaves, children, and the wife. Now the first subject taken up is how to treat the wife, what I call the gynecologia [laughter]; that is the first part of the *Oeconomicus*. And there Ischomachus describes how he trained her so that she was a model of a wife, and that is very charming and very amusing to read. And now the Ischomachus of whom we know from that orator had a wife and then a daughter from this marriage, and that daughter married Callias. And Callias, who was[64] a playboy of the worst kind, had then illicit relations with his mother-in-law while of course his wife was still living. That was part of the gossip of Athens. Now the funny thing would be if Ischomachus, when he tells the story of that wonderful way in which he educated his young wife here, would later on [LS chuckles] have this great disappointment [laughter], and I regard it as perfectly possible that this is implied in Xenophon's treatment of this matter. I thought that this is not wholly inappropriate to mention that.

Now the *Oeconomicus* is—of course of all these dialogues the *Oeconomicus* is one of the most detailed presentations of the whole question of the management of the household which we have apart from Aristotle's writings on the subject. And according to some indications there, the economic art is not fundamentally different from the political art, and that is developed there are at some greater length, and not without some amusing indicators, some of them you saw from the passage read to you earlier in this class.

Now I think I would like to mention only two more passages from Xenophon, one from the *Banquet* because it is quite characteristic and I believe it has not found the attention which it deserves. It is in chapter 4, paragraph 56. There is, on the occasion of a banquet, i.e., where people were in a slightly intoxicated condition, where many things were possible which would not be permitted without this occasion. Each one has to say what he regards as the best thing he possesses. And Socrates of course also has something good. Do you have it? 4.56. Now let me—I believe it is about here. Now let me see—where Callias says to Socrates: What is it of which you are proud? Ya? And Socrates claims to be proud of having the art of, not the midwife, what do you call that, who brings together?

Student: The matchmaker.

LS: [65]Ya, matchmaker. "But why are you so proud about such a undistinguished art?" Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

> "For really I take it to be a scandalous one!"
> "First, let us understand one another; and know in few words what this artist is properly to do, whose very name has made you so merry; but, to be brief, let us, in short, fix upon some one thing that we may all agree in. That would[xxxv] be so—"Doubtless," answered all the company; and during

[xxxv] In Welwood: "Shall it?"

> the thread of his discourse they made him no other answer than[xxxvi] "doubtless." (*Banquet*, IV.56, 614)[xxxvii]

LS: Yes, in Greek, *panu men oun*. Socrates asks something and all say: Certainly. Good. Plato has frequently been ridiculed for the fact that the repliers always say (but they do not always same the same thing), more or less: undoubtedly, surely, necessarily, and so on. And they say how unartistic this is.[xxxviii] Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'Certainly, certainly[xxxix],' answered all the company; and during the thread of his discourse they made him no other answer but 'certainly.'[xl] Having begun so, 'Is it not certainly true,' said Socrates, 'that the business of an artist of that kind is to meddle[xli]—" (*Banquet*, IV.56-57, 614).

LS: Matchmaker, let us—

Mr. Reinken: Matchmaker.

LS: Ya, why does he try to avoid that word? Yes.

Mr. Reinken: The nineteenth century had its drawbacks.

LS: Ya. [Great laughter]

Mr. Reinken:

> "It's[xlii] to manage so as that the person they introduce be perfectly agreeable to one that employs him?"—"Certainly,[xliii]" they replied. "Is it not certain, too, that a good face and fine clothes do mightily contribute towards the making of such a person agreeable?"—"Certainly.[xliv]"—"Do you not observe that the eyes of the same person look at some times full of pleasure and kindness, and at other times with an air of aversion and scorn?"—"Certainly.[xlv]"—"Well, does not the same voice sometimes express itself with modesty and sweetness, and sometimes with anger and fierceness?"—"Certainly."—"And are there not some discourses that

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[xxxvi] In Welwood: "but"
[xxxvii] Page references to the passages read from *Banquet* are from *The Whole Works of Xenophon*, translated by James Welwood.
[xxxviii] That is, the ridiculers.
[xxxix] In Welwood: "doubtless"
[xl] In Welwood: "doubtless"
[xli] In Welwood: "manage"
[xlii] In Welwood: "is"
[xliii] In Welwood: "doubtless"
[xliv] In Welwood: "doubtless"
[xlv] In Welwood: "doubtless"

> naturally beget hatred and adversion, and others that conciliate love and affection?"—"Certainly.[xlvi]" (*Banquet*, IV.57-58, 614).

LS: You watch that it is always the same answer, "certainly," however you translate; *panu men oun*. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'If, then, the midwife—'"[66] [Laughter]

LS: The good—

Mr. Reinken: "'in his profession, ought he not to instruct those that are under his direction which way to make themselves agreeable to others in all these things I have mentioned?'—'Certainly.'—'But who is most to be valued; he who renders them agreeable to one person only, or he that renders them agreeable to many? Are you not for the last?' Some of them answered him as before, with 'Certainly.[xlvii]'" (614)

LS: No, but there they split. There they split. "And some said, 'of course, he who makes them agreeable to most people.' And the others said, 'Certainly.'" [Laughter] And now what does Socrates say?

Mr. Reinken: "And the rest said it was very plain that it was much better to please a great many than a few. 'That is very well,' said Socrates; 'we agreed upon every head hitherto; but what if the person we are speaking of can instruct his pupil to gain the hearts of a whole city,[xlviii] will you not say he is excellent in his art?' This, they all agreed, was clear. 'And if he can raise his scholars to such perfection, has he not reason to be proud of his profession? And deserves he not to receive a handsome reward?'" (614-615).

LS: No, let me—let us stop here. Where is that point? This is so verbose, one does not really recognize it.

Mr. Fielding: It's at the end of paragraph 60.

LS: No, there in paragraph 59. "Then there was a split. Some[67] gave an answer and said: He who makes that candidate agreeable to most, and the others evaded a question by simply saying, by simply answering to such a question: Certainly. As if you say: Would you like to have a mutton or veal?, we would say: Certainly.[68] But Socrates said that[69] there is also agreement as to that; i.e., Socrates claims that there is still universal agreement, while there is no longer universal agreement. This is a part of the art of Socrates: to consider dissent under certain conditions and to disregard dissent under other conditions. The translation is very bad at this point.

Now if we had more time, of course, we would consider more passages in Xenophon. One of the most interesting and obviously relevant is the discussion of justice in the First

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[xlvi] In Welwood: "doubtless"
[xlvii] In Welwood: "doubtless"
[xlviii] In Welwood: "state"

Book of the *Education of Cyrus*. There Cyrus is presented as a—well, as a wonderful boy of course, especially in Dakyns' translation, as the finest type of British public schoolboy. And then he is brought up in Persia, which is a super-Sparta: very virtuous and very noble. But unfortunately his mother comes from Medea, and Medea is ruled by a tyrant. And so while visiting with his grandfather, he becomes aware of the amenities of tyrannical life, and this is the origin of his corruption. And when he comes home from this stay with the maternal grandfather, he has a conversation with his mother about justice, in which the key question is: Does justice consist in giving or leaving to everything what belongs to him, or in giving or leaving to him what is good for him? And the simple example here, the unforgettable example in its simplicity, is the big boy with a small coat and the small boy with a big coat: Would it not be juster if you would give the big coat to the big boy and the small coat to the small boy? That is what young Cyrus, the future tyrannical ruler, suggested in his plain common sense. But he was severely beaten by the teacher because he was not asked what is good for that boy, but what belongs to him, what is just. And here you see the grave question: If what is just is not the same [as] what is good, some buildings begin to tumble. And then[70] later on, when Cyrus has reached manhood and is sent out as general by the Persian commonwealth, he has another conversation on justice, this time with his father. And here the great question is this: he had been brought up in the simple verities (thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not rob, etc. etc.), and now he is told by his father: Thou shalt lie, thou shalt cheat, thou shalt kill, namely, in war. Then the father explains to him in this charming Xenophontic way, and he tells him: Well, we told you these unqualified prohibitions when you were children, just as we told you the story of the stork when you were children, but now when you are grown up, you are old enough to make distinctions and say: Well, this first was true regarding fellow citizens in peacetime, there you have Must not steal, lie, and so on and so on, but in war against foreign communities, there, what was good in the relations among citizens is bad. That's another grave aspect of the problem of justice. One could not state the problems of justice more simply and tellingly as Xenophon does in these two chapters, and I think among the many things you might wisely do during the Christmas vacation, this should occupy a privileged place, to read these two chapters. [71]

[end of session]

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[1] Deleted "say—."

[2] Deleted "rather—."

[3] Changed from "would be both more just, more pious—both just and pious and noble."

[4] Deleted "what was—."

[5] Deleted "what."

[6] Deleted "you can—the only—."

[7] Deleted "So he is—."

[8] Deleted "Yeah."

[9] Deleted "'in.'"

[10] Deleted "with a thought—."

[11] Deleted "now—yeah, that Xenophon—."

[12] Deleted "with—."

[13] Deleted "So, yeah."

[14] Deleted "LS: Pardon?

R: Right out in the open."

[15] Deleted "and—."

[16] Deleted "Yeah, now, yeah."

[17] Deleted "are—."

[18] Deleted "this is—."

[19] Deleted "you know."

[20] Deleted "a very—."

[21] Deleted "This is;" moved "surely."

[22] Deleted "would have—."

[23] Changed from "Well yeah, 'what—things which everyone—which all knew,' yes."

[24] Deleted "You see, in—the—the—."

[25] Deleted "The Athenian—."

[26] Deleted "Soul—his—he was as clear—."

[27] Deleted "He makes—when—."

[28] Deleted "not—."

[29] Deleted "Can you—."

[30] Deleted "Glaucon—."

[31] Deleted "if you want to find out—I mean—."

[32] Deleted "Well, what are—."

[33] Deleted "that seems to be very—."

[34] Deleted "this—it so may—."

[35] Deleted "you could not—."

[36] Deleted "the."

[37] Deleted "goes on—or."

[38] Deleted "yeah?"

[39] Deleted "Yeah, no, but this kind of know—."

[40] Deleted "them."

[41] Deleted "being compelled that—."

[42] Deleted "sure, in—."

[43] Deleted "I—."

[44] Deleted "even the gods cannot"

[45] Deleted "the—the—."

[46] Changed from "makes always" to "always makes"
[47] Moved "to come again."

[48] Deleted "R: Oh.

LS: Yeah."

[49] Deleted "that is—."

[50] Deleted "LS: Pericles, yeah.

R: Hm?"

[51] Deleted "R: Violence.

LS: Yeah."

[52] Deleted "this will—first of all the whole question—."

[53] Deleted "the wise son not under an obligation to listen—."

[54] Deleted "we can—."

[55] Deleted "see—."

[56] Deleted "subscription—."

[57] Deleted "'for the concern—.'"

[58] Deleted "'that not only the—.'"

[59] Deleted "and—and."

[60] Deleted "that this."

[61] Deleted "until you would found a—."

[62] Deleted "this the *Apology* takes with—."

[63] Deleted "has this—."

[64] Deleted "a—a very—."

[65] Deleted "LS: Pardon?

A: Matchmaker.

LS: Matchmaker."

[66] Deleted "uh, uh—marriage—."

[67] Deleted "said—."

[68] Deleted "yeah. And what—and they said—yeah."

[69] Deleted "this is also—."

[70] Deleted "so this is—and you—that is—then."

[71] Now this is all I have to say, and we will meet again on Thursday, here at 3:30 and you don't bring with you any books or notebooks except the ones that are empty which you will use for your examination paper.[71]